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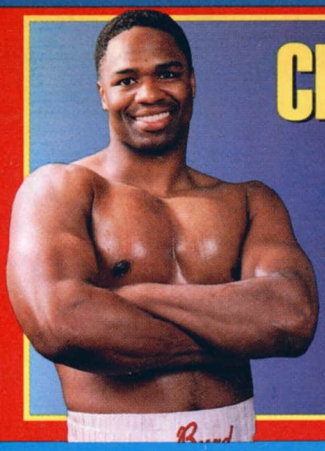

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**CRUISERWEIGHT Ch: James Toney** 1-Nate Miller 2-Marcelo Dominguez 3-Terry Dunstan 4-Arthur Williams 5-Robert Danials 6-Saul Montana 7-Johnny Nelson 8-Ralf Rocchigiani 9-Darren Corbett 10-Alexander Gurov

**LT. HEAVYWEIGHT Ch: Vacant** 1-Virgil Hill 2-Montell Griffin 3-Ole Klemetsen 4- Eddy Smulders 5-Merqui Sosa 6-Drake Thadzi 7-Frank Tate 8-Mohamed Siluvangi 9-Michael Nunn 10-Crawford Ashley

**SP. MIDDLEWEIGHT Ch: Mads Larsen** 1-Robin Reid 2-Vincenzo Nardiello 3-Henry Wharton 4-Roberto Duran 5-Jorge Castro 6-Dean Francis 7-Herol Graham 8-Vinny Pazienza 9-Robert Allen 10-Chris Eubank

**MIDDLEWEIGHT Ch: Freeman Barr** 1-Julio Cesar Green 2-Silvio Branco 3-Julio Cesar Vasquez 4-Paul Vaden 5-Hassine Cherifi 6-Andrew Council 7-Darren Maciunski 8-Dana Rosenblatt 9-Anthony Stephans 10-Antoine Echels

**LT. MIDDLEWEIGHT Ch: Vacant** 1-Raul Marquez 2-Terry Norris 3-Verno Phillips 4-Julian Jackson 5-Tony Marshall 6-Bronco McKart 7-Troy Waters 8-David Ciarlante 9-Javier Castillejo 10-Quirino Garcia

**WELTERWEIGHT Ch: Jose Rivera** 1-Pernell Whitaker 2-Julio Cesar Chavez 3-Jose Luis Lopez 4-Oba Carr 5-Patrick Charpentier 6-Alessandro Duran 7-Hector Camacho 8-Peter Malinga 9-Larry Barnes 10-Shannan Taylor

**LT. WELTERWEIGHT Ch: Vacant** 1-Juan Martin Coggi 2-Miquel A. Gonzalez 3-Kostya Tszyu 4-Soren Sondergaard 5-Michey Ward 6-Alfonso Sanchez 7-Charles Murray 8-Rafael Ruelas 9-Carlos Gonzalez 10-Ismael Chaves

**LIGHTWEIGHT Ch: Tony Pep** 1-Juan Molina 2-Arturo Gatti 3-George Scott 4-James Leija 5-Phillip Holiday 6-Alberto Sicurella 7-Billy Irwin 8-Israel Cardona 9-David O Tetteh 10-Levander Johnson

**SP. FEATHERWEIGHT Ch: Vacant** 1-Azumah Nelson 2-Angel Manfreddy 3-Gabriel Ruelas 4-Santos A. Rebolledo 5-Tom Johnson 6-Orlando Canizales 7-Anatoly Alexandrov 8-Tracy Patterson 9-Julien Lorcy 10-Derrick Gainer

**FEATHERWEIGHT Ch: Radford Beasley** 1-Kevin Kelly 2-Billy Hardy 3-Steve Robinson 4-Claudio V. Martinet 5-Manuel Medina 6-Cesar Soto 7-Hector Acero-Sanchez 8-Juan Man Marquez 9-Carlos A. Rios 10-Eduardo Barrios

**SP. BANTAMWEIGHT Ch: Patrick Mullings** 1-Junior Jones 2-Antonio Cermano 3-Daniel Zaragoza 4-Marco A. Barrera 5-Danny Romero 6-Jesus Salud 7-Casius Baloyi 8-Spencer Oliver 9-Rafael Del Valle 10-Lehlo Ledwaba

**BANTAMWEIGHT Ch: Johnny Bredahl** 1-Veerapol Sahaprom 2-Daorung Siriwat 3-Paul Ayala 4-Cuautemoc Gomez 5-Mbulelo Botile 6-Sirimongkol Singmanassak 7-Dario Aguaga 8-Victor Rabanales 9-Lakhin CP-Gym 10-Oscar Garro

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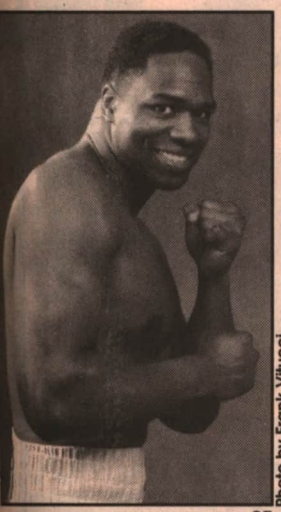

Photo by Frank Vitucci

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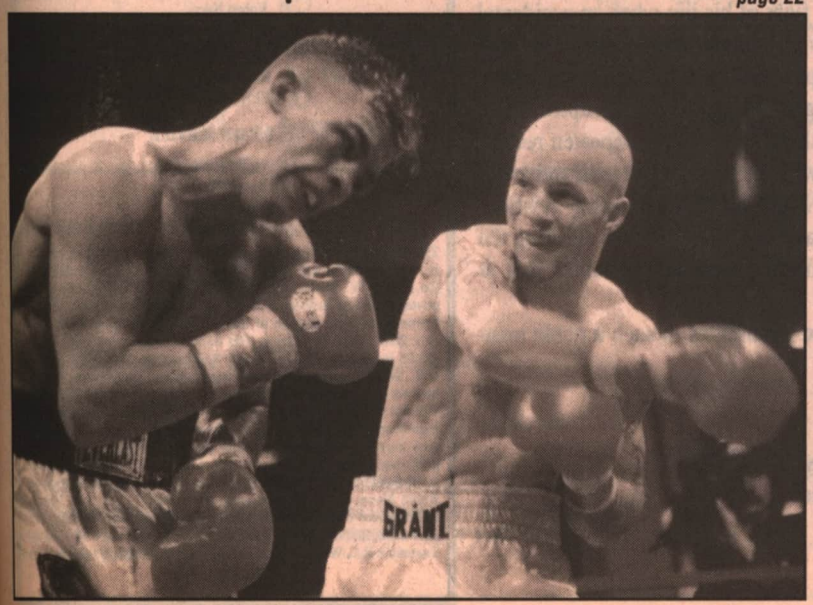


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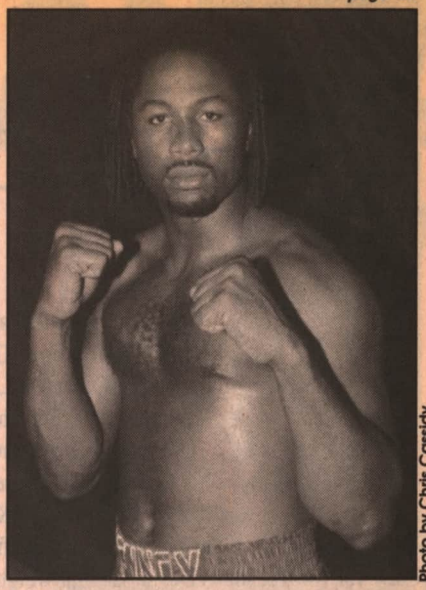

Photo by Chris Cassidy

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# RINGSIDE

You've gotta feel a little bit sorry for Yory Boy Campas and Miguel Angel Gonzalez, two innocent victims of the upcoming Oscar De La Hoya-Julio Cesar Chavez rematch, tentatively set for September 18. Campas was promised a shot at "The Golden Boy" providing he got past Anthony Stephens in his first defense of the IBF junior middleweight title, which he did via third-round TKO. Gonzalez rightfully anticipated another crack at Chavez after fighting "The Lion Of Culiacan" to a draw for the vacant WBC super lightweight title in March. But both Gonzalez and Campas will have to settle for lesser paydays now that De La Hoya and Chavez are going to fight each other again.

Ironically, the change in plans is a direct response to the over 800,000 pay-per-view buys the Chavez-Gonzalez bout generated. Top Rank, which will promote De La Hoya-Chavez II, rightfully figured that it was Chavez who was responsible for such a healthy number, and that throwing the aging Mexican icon in with De La Hoya again will attract another PPV bonanza. The fact that De La Hoya figures to make mincemeat out of Chavez again really doesn't matter as long as Chavez' die-hard fans are willing to support him with their hard-earned cash.

What De La Hoya-Chavez II won't do is silence The Golden Boy's growing number of critics. They contend that in order to prove he's everything he's cracked up to be, De La Hoya has to fight young, dangerous opponents like Felix Trinidad and Ike Quartey, not over-the-hill heroes like Chavez. At least Campas—a bigger, fresher, and harder-punching combatant than Chavez—would have been a step in the right direction. De La Hoya-Chavez II is simply backtracking for big bucks.

Sometimes, it takes a little guy to show the big boys how it's supposed to be done. Unlike some of his heavier counterparts, WBC strawweight champion Ricardo Lopez has decided to do the right thing. A brief note in a recent WBC press release stated that "El Finito" has informed the organization that he "does not want and will not accept any fight other than a rematch with WBA champion Rosendo Alvarez."

As you'll recall, Alvarez was giving Lopez the fight of his life when an accidental clash of heads opened a gash over Lopez' right eye, resulting in a decidedly unsatisfactory, seventh-round technical draw. Earlier, Lopez had found himself on the floor, compliments of Alvarez' right hand, and if the fight had not been interrupted, there was a good chance that Lopez would have lost both the title and his unbeaten record. Frequently, under similar circumstances, a fighter will take the prudent path and avoid a quick rematch with such a dangerous adversary. And Lopez, due to a cozy relationship with WBC President Jose Sulaiman, would have had little difficulty ducking the hard-hitting Nicaraguan. But Lopez, his pride smarting, demanded another shot at Alvarez.

Way to go, Ricardo. If all champions conducted themselves in such a noble manner, boxing would be in much better shape.

Are you paying attention, Oscar?

**Nigel Collins**
**Editor-in-Chief**


**Volume 77, No. 8** **August 1998**

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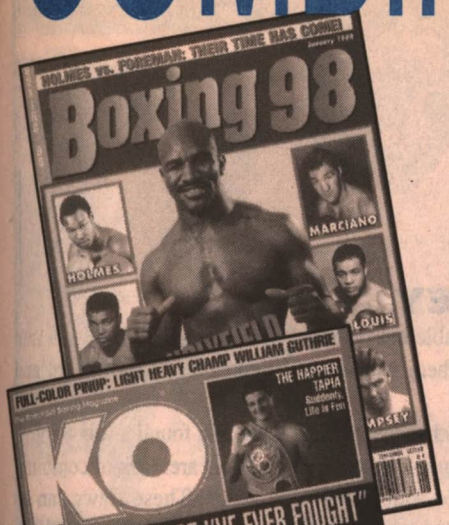


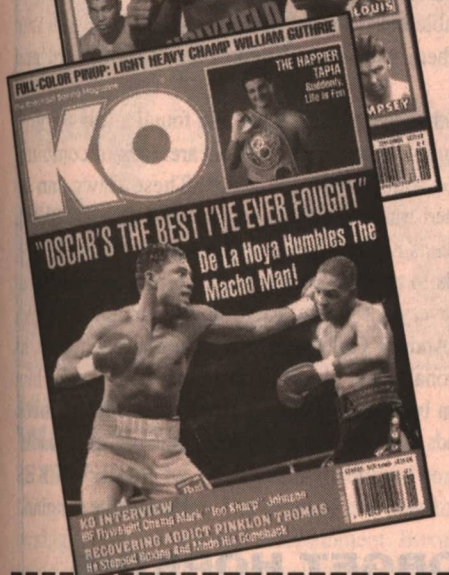


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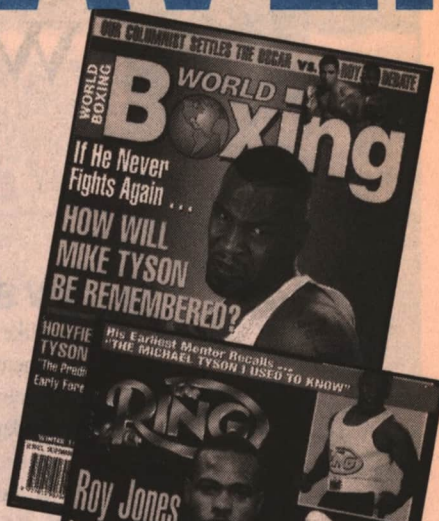


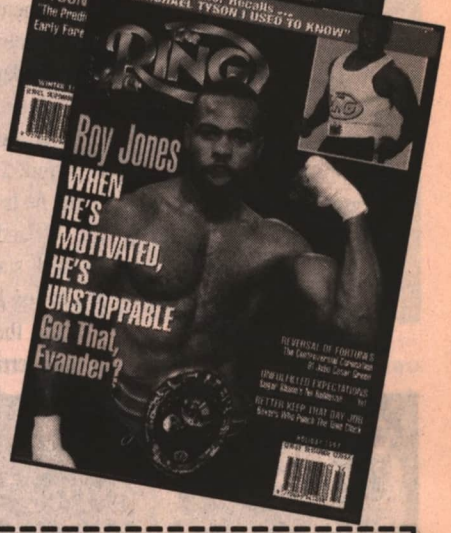


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# COME OUT WRITING

**We welcome your letters, which may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034**

## TYSON NEEDS ROONEY

Mike Tyson was a feared, respected, and remarkable heavyweight in the late-1980s. He tore into opponents with multi-combinations and confused them with superior upper body movement and head movement.

Today, Tyson is a remarkable heavyweight in another sense of the word. He found a way to blow it all. Right now, he is a beatable heavyweight. We know what the major flaws are: lack of combinations, no head movement, predictability, frustration, cuts, lack of strategy. These flaws can be summed up quite simply: He doesn't have a respected trainer. All due respect to Richie Giachetti, but he is not the right man to train Tyson. The man needs Kevin Rooney, and he needs him now.

If and when Tyson gets his license back, he needs to rebuild. He needs five or six easy fights in quick succession, like the old days when he fought every six weeks. Right now Evander Holyfield, Lennox Lewis, and Ray Mercer would all beat him. Andrew Golota could give him a rough time, as could the huge Michael Grant. Chris Byrd, Larry Donald, and Henry Akinwande would make him look terrible, and I would pay good money to see him box David Tua. This may be asking too much of him, but Tyson needs to live in the gym and get the old spark back.

PAUL WICKES
Hampshire, England

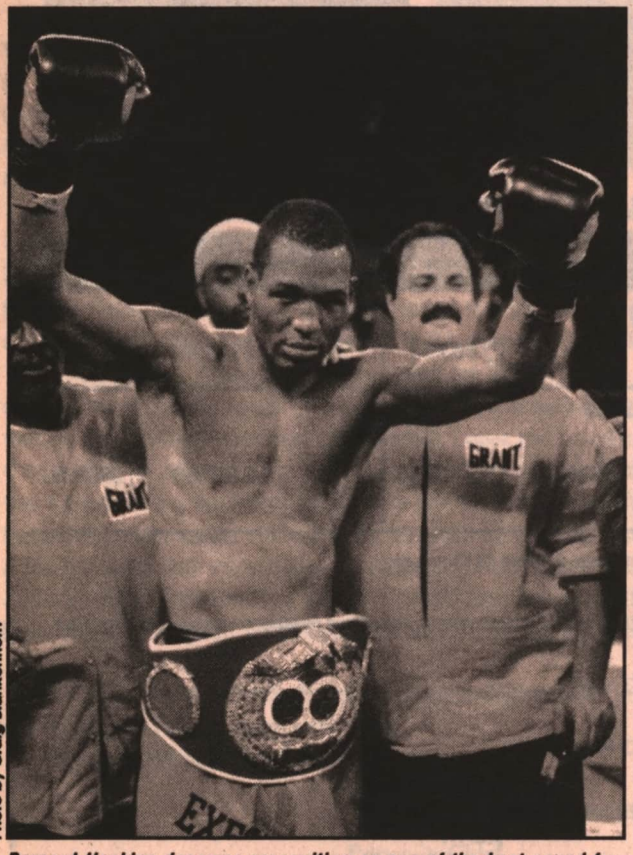



Photo by Craig Blankenhorn

***Bernard Hopkins deserves recognition as one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world, says reader Arthur Cane. THE RING agrees. Hopkins is number 10 in this month's rankings.***

## DON'T FORGET HOPKINS

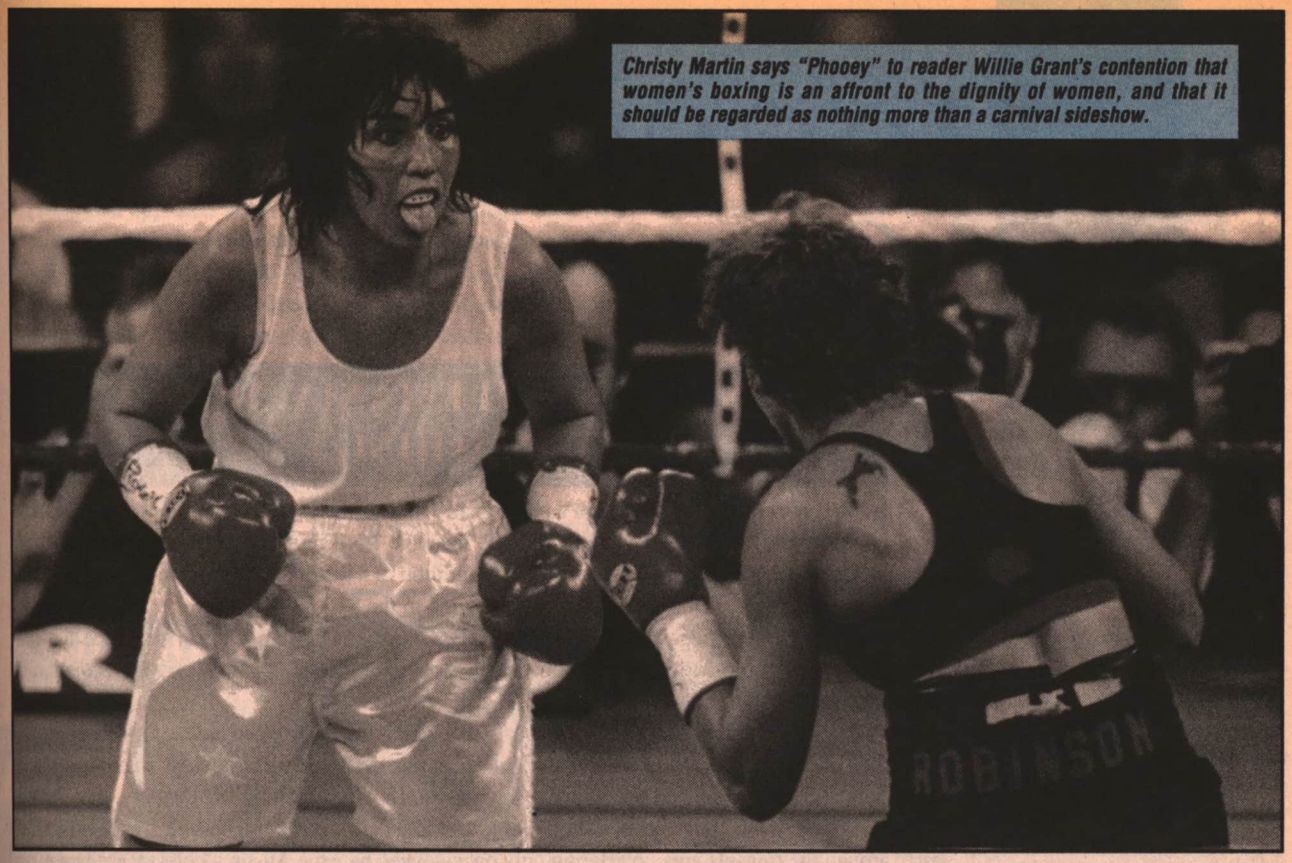
I have wondered for years why Bernard Hopkins is not in THE RING'S pound-for-pound ratings. Since losing his pro debut by controversial decision in 1988, Hopkins has lost only one time, and that was by decision to none other than Roy Jones. Hopkins tied the all-time record for the fastest world title defense in the history of boxing with his 24-second annihilation of rugged Steve Frank, and Hopkins' spectacular fourth-round knockout of previously unbeaten Joe Lipsey was an absolute work of art.

In 1997, Hopkins turned in three virtuoso performances, almost effortlessly crushing former world champion John David Jackson, unbeaten knockout artist Glen Johnson, and the tough Andrew Council. Indeed, the surgical precision with which Hopkins has easily dissected all of his victims is long overdue for proper recognition. When you factor in that Hopkins has accomplished all of this despite his rough beginnings and despite his tumultuous managerial relationships, it becomes clear that Hopkins is chock full of character and guts, and all of the stuff of which great champions are made.

The fact is, Hopkins has been deserving of laudatory praises of the highest order for many years, and your pound-for-pound list cannot continue to be taken seriously if it continues to exclude him.

ARTHUR CANE
Philadelphia, PA

***[Editor's note: We concur. You'll find Hopkins at number 10 in this month's pound-for-pound rankings.]***



*Christy Martin says "Phooey" to reader Willie Grant's contention that women's boxing is an affront to the dignity of women, and that it should be regarded as nothing more than a carnival sideshow.*

## NO BETTER THAN WRESTLING

I was amused by Nigel Collins' editorial comments in the May '98 issue of THE RING. But perhaps it's wrestling that lags behind boxing in illegitimacy and entertainment. Boxing, after all, has its own ringmaster, Don King, a salesman who could sell snow to the Eskimos, and had the boxing public believe Mike Tyson was the fighter of old. If they pay to see Tyson-Holyfield III, then wrestling fans have a right to believe their sport is for real.

In addition to Tyson, Henry Akinwande displayed his interest in wrestling when he grappled Lennox Lewis. Then there was a silent "no mas" return when Oliver McCall decided to stop fighting in his match with Lewis; at least wrestlers don't quit in the ring. Even boxing fans know when Hulk Hogan is champion, but how many boxing fans can name even one boxing champ per division, not to mention the myriad clowns rigged up by the alphabet clan.

Wrestling's steroid scandal was more than compensated for by the boxers arrested for drug use and domestic squabbles. Wrestling gives the public the matches it wants to see. When will boxing feature Lewis-Holyfield, or Trinidad-De La Hoya. Wrestling is predetermined, but boxing's judges counter with bogus outcomes like Foreman-Briggs. Does any wrestling garb equal Briggs' hairstyle?

KURTIS C. WULF
Glendale, AZ

## FOR MEN ONLY

As a longtime reader and subscriber of THE RING, I recall that at one time the publication contained a section on pro wrestling. I felt that THE RING was somehow compromising its integrity to some degree. I was pleased to see the demise of that coverage.

Now we have women boxers. I contend that the sight of two women punching each other out is a spectacle thoroughly degrading to the participants and an exhibition worthy only of a carnival sideshow. I feel that Christy Martin and others of her ilk are sacrificing pride, dignity, and femininity for notoriety and wealth. I was raised to believe that men should act like men and women should behave like ladies. Quite an archaic tenet, I admit, and I concede that "ladies" in that context are a vanishing breed, a veritable group facing extinction, or, if you will, an endangered species.

Certainly, I acknowledge being out of the times. Are there other old fossils out there that believe as I do on this subject?

WILLIE GRANT
San Leandro, CA

## BACK ON BRIGGS

I was really surprised Shannon Briggs fought so well against Lennox Lewis. I hate to admit it, but Briggs earned my respect in defeat. I didn't think Briggs had the heart to stay with Lewis, and I admire him even more for getting up after Lewis knocked him down. The Briggs-Lewis fight also showed me that Lewis cannot beat Evander Holyfield.

Lewis was actually in trouble against Briggs. Against a stronger fighter like Holyfield, Lewis gets knocked out. Lewis showed he had problems with boxers that move, and he proved he is vulnerable to being tagged. If Briggs scared Lewis for two rounds, Lewis will need the world's largest diaper when he faces "The Real Deal."

ROB LINDEN
Media, PA ■

# ROUND ONE

## TYSON AT WRESTLEMANIA: MONEY FOR NOTHING

Talk about easy money. Mike Tyson's performance at WrestleMania XIV in Boston, the primary focus of the World Wrestling Federation's hype machine from mid-January until the event took place on March 29, earned him anywhere from $3-million to $4-million, depending on which report you believe. Yes, that's a mammoth pay cut compared to the $20-million he was making per fight, but it's still close to 10 times as much as the top WWF superstars make in a year. And what did Iron Mike do to earn this bankroll, besides draw mainstream sports fans in with his name recognition? Virtually nothing.

Tyson's role was that of a "special enforcer" for the main event between defending WWF champion (and resident evildoer) Shawn Michaels and the organization's most popular wrestler, "Stone Cold" Steve Austin. Tyson had gotten into a shoving match with Austin in late-January, then joined Michaels' rebel group, "DeGeneration X," in early-March. At WrestleMania, he wandered harmlessly around the ringside area, interfering only once—when he gave Austin a colossal wedgie in an attempt to roll him back into the ring. But then, in a sudden twist that everybody at the Fleet Center except for the "shocked" commentators saw coming weeks in advance, Tyson's allegiance shifted. With the referee incapacitated, Tyson rolled into the ring and made the three-count for Austin. The fans erupted. Tyson decked Michaels with a right hand only slightly more convincing than the shot that kayoed Bruce Seldon, then celebrated with his new buddy Austin. Good had triumphed over evil, and Tyson, who had been receiving the loudest boos in wrestling since Sgt. Slaughter turned pro-Iraq during the Gulf War, was a hero.

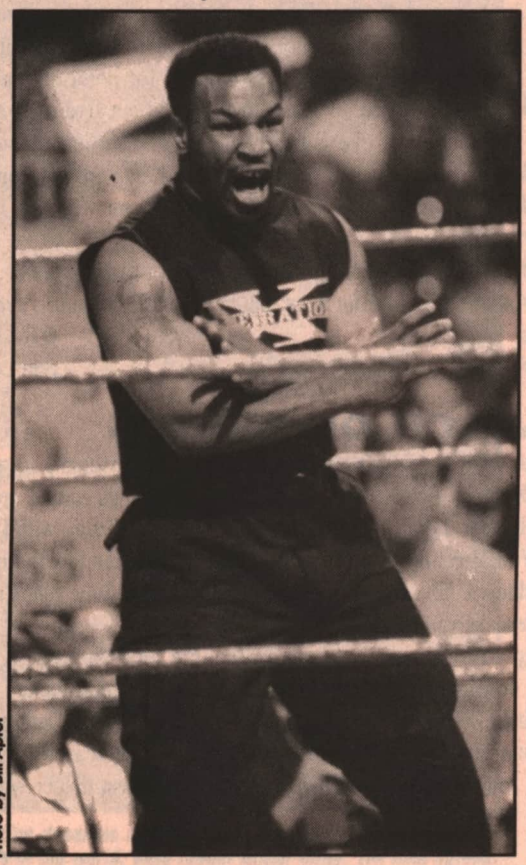


Photo by Bill Apter

*Tyson, a wrestling freak*

So the fans went home happy, and so did the WWF suits whose investment earned them a reported 2.3 pay-per-view buy rate (they needed a 1.5 to break even), but that doesn't change the fact that Tyson the wrestler is a disgrace to both boxing fans *and* wrestling fans. He looks horribly out of place amongst a cast of comparatively talented actors, wearing an awkward grin and blowing almost every line that's fed to him. (He called Austin everything from "Cold Stone" to "Cone Stold," only to have the new champion angrily correct him at the post-WrestleMania press conference.) The one thing Tyson has been adequate at is the physical side of wrestling, as his shoving match with Austin and knockout of Michaels were fairly convincing. Granted, he's going to have to learn a lot more than just basic punching and pushing before WWF owner Vince McMahon allows him to wrestle a whole match, but it's not beyond the realm of possibility to think Tyson may have a future in tights and kneepads. After all, he says he's a lot happier following in the footsteps of Bruno Sammartino than of Muhammad Ali. "I haven't been f__ed over in this sport as much as I was f__ed over in that other one," Tyson said after WrestleMania.

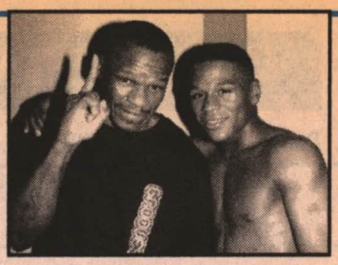
**—Eric Raskin**

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

It's taken some time, but junior lightweight sensation Floyd Mayweather Jr. and his dad, Floyd Sr., are finally reunited, and it looks permanent. Floyd Sr., a welterweight contender in the mid-1980s, first appeared in his son's corner on February 28, on the undercard of the Stevie Johnston-George Scott lightweight title fight at Bally's Casino in Atlantic City. Floyd Jr. easily took out Sammy Girard with a second-round knockout to keep his record spotless, but it was his father's appearance that garnered the most attention.

Floyd Sr. was released from prison in April '97 after serving 3½ years on drug charges. He had been keeping up with his son's progress on TV during his stay, while Roger Mayweather, Floyd Sr.'s brother, trained the young prospect. After the Girard fight, Floyd Sr. let out a huge sigh of relief, just happy to be by his son's side.

"I feel great," Mayweather said. "It was devastating watching him on TV and not being a part of it. There's a close bond between me and my son. This was a very special day for both of us. The bloodlines are strong. I don't care how old he gets; he's still my baby. Even if I have to crawl to him, and he's 100 and I'm 124."



*Floyd Mayweather Sr. will be a permanent fixture in Floyd Jr.'s corner*

Meanwhile, it seems as if Uncle Roger has been phased out of Team Mayweather. Floyd Sr. will act as both manager and trainer for his son.

"What can I say?" Floyd Jr. said. "There's only so much money that can go around. Roger is a good trainer, but he doesn't know me like my dad knows me. My dad is the best for me, because he knows me best. I'm usually anxious before a fight, but with my dad around, I felt a little more relaxed than usual."

**—Joe Santoliquito**

## THE BOXING BOOKSHELF

In reading *This Bloody Mary Is The Last Thing I Own: A Journey To The End Of Boxing*, you get the sense that author Jonathan Rendall is a crotchety man in his mid-50s, worn down by a life around sweaty towels, smoke-filled arenas, and swollen, disfigured faces. To the contrary, he's actually in his early-30s, but he's already seen more than he should have of the world of boxing.

This comes through eloquently and poignantly in *This Bloody Mary Is The Last Thing I Own* (208 pages, The Ecco Press, $23.95 hardcover). It's a gripping portrayal of what life is like on the boxing circuit and of the varied personalities Rendall has encountered.

The book travels through Rendall's myriad experiences both as a boxing writer and as an agent of featherweight contender Colin "Sweet C" McMillan. He covers almost every crease of boxing's underbelly, painting a lurid picture of hangers-on, sycophants, and exploiters, all plotting and scheming for that big payday that will lead them out of the world of professional boxing.

The brutality of boxing is also explored, particularly in a segment involving a fight between Jim McDonnell and Kenneth Vice. Rendall's chilling depiction of what transpired puts you at ringside, as Vice tears into McDonnell: "Blood had come out of McDonnell's mouth and spilled onto the canvas under the ropes ... the blood was dark and thick, almost black, like pools of motor oil."

Rendall never saw a knockout like it, nor had many in the arena that night. McDonnell recovered, but it only seemed to take another divot out of the sport Rendall loved as a boy.

**—Joe Santoliquito**

When Willie Pastrano died of liver cancer last December, author Pete Billac was writing the final chapter of *Willie The Wisp* (Prestige Publications, 192 pages, $14.95), his biography of the 1963-65 light heavyweight ruler. It's probably right, therefore, to give him the benefit of the doubt and assume it was the rush to publish that is responsible for the sloppy editing, factual errors, and frequent misspellings of names that make this a very unslick tribute to one of the slickest champions of the last 30 years.

When you read, for instance, that Willie Pep was the *middleweight* champion of the world, you have to grit your teeth to continue. But what makes it worthwhile are the large, verbatim chunks of the interviews Billac taped with Pastrano, especially the ones concerning the fight in which he lost the 175-pound title to Jose Torres and the subsequent heroin addiction that made the next decade of Pastrano's life a Brahma bull ride through hell.

This is a *well-intentioned* book whose *glaring* typos and *egregious* misspellings, along with its *overuse* of italics for emphasis, distract and detract from its homage to a boxer whose accomplishments deserve more attention.

There is much in the book that is interesting. Pastrano, who turned pro at 15, was a top heavyweight contender before he upset Harold Johnson for the light heavy crown. A magnet to women, apparently the former fat boy who started boxing to lose weight never got over his inferiority complex. Invited to appear on *The Tonight Show* after winning the title, Pastrano declined. "I can't sing or dance," he said. "Who wants to see me?"

But too much is missing from Billac's book, such as more about New Orleans fight legend Whitey Esnault, who taught Pastrano his hit-and-don't-get-hit style; and Ralph Dupas, Pastrano's boyhood friend who grew up to win a world title himself at junior middleweight. Those topics would have been more appropriate than the chapters called "What A Manager Does" and "A Fight Card," as well as the one tracing the history of boxing and the heavyweight title that jarringly pops up between 1954 and '55 in the chronological review of Pastrano's career.

Available by mail order only (Prestige Publications, 2450 Severn Ave., Suite 214, Metairie, LA 70001), a portion of the proceeds will go to the late champion's family. So order it, grit your teeth, and get what you can from the quotable Pastrano himself, who once called a draw decision "like pushing your mother-in-law over a cliff in your own Cadillac that isn't insured."

**—Pete Ehrmann**

# TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

| DATE | WINNER/LOSER | NETWORK | DIVISION | SIGNIFICANCE | MATCHUP | RESULT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3-13-98 | Roberto Garcia W 12 Harold Warren | ESPN | IBF jl | A- | B- | C+ |
| *He's no Gatti, but the new champion sure can box; veteran Warren never in it* | | | | | | |
| **3-14-98** | **Vince Phillips KO 1 Alfonso Sanchez** | **HBO** | **IBF jw** | **A** | **B-** | **B** |
| ***Don't blame Sanchez; "Cool" Vince at the top of his game*** | | | | | | |
| **3-14-98** | **Keith Mullings KO 5 David Ciarlante** | **HBO** | **WBC jm** | **A** | **C+** | **B+** |
| ***Italian challenger tough, but Mullings too complete; where has this guy been?*** | | | | | | |
| 3-23-98 | Lucia Rijker KO 1 Mary Ann Almager | FOX | jw | C | C- | C+ |
| *Rijker awesome in blowout; now we know why Christy Martin has been so quiet* | | | | | | |
| 3-23-98 | Butterbean KO 3 Bill Eaton | FOX | h | F | C- | C+ |
| *The Bean gets revenge in rematch, but who cares? This act has gotten very old* | | | | | | |
| **3-23-98** | **Yory Boy Campas KO 3 Anthony Stephens** | **FOX** | **IBF jm** | **B-** | **B** | **A-** |
| ***Campas may be best bodypuncher in the game; match with De La Hoya not far off*** | | | | | | |
| 3-24-98 | Bronco McKart KO 9 Kenny Ellis | USA | jm | C+ | B- | C+ |
| *Will McKart ever again face a top junior middleweight?* | | | | | | |
| 3-27-98 | Paul Nave W 12 Greg Haugen | ESPN2 | w | C | B+ | B+ |
| *Nave's no Vinny Paz, but has enough to teach old Mutt some new tricks* | | | | | | |
| **3-28-98** | **Lennox Lewis KO 5 Shannon Briggs** | **HBO** | **WBC h** | **A+** | **C-** | **B+** |
| ***Briggs crashes as expected, but provides Lewis with a few scary moments*** | | | | | | |
| 3-31-98 | Tony Marshall KO 11 Anthony Jones | USA | jm | C+ | A | A |
| *Streaking Marshall too much for "Baby" in scorcher* | | | | | | |
| 3-31-98 | Robert Hawkins W 10 Boris Powell | USA | h | C- | B+ | D |
| *Hawkins rises from a pair of early knockdowns to prevail in snoozer* | | | | | | |
| **4-3-98** | **Frankie Liles W 12 Andrei Schkalikov** | **Show** | **WBA sm** | **A-** | **C** | **C+** |
| ***Challenger better than advertised; Liles pushed every step of the way*** | | | | | | |
| **4-3-98** | **Felix Trinidad KO 4 Mahenge Zulu** | **Show** | **IBF w** | **A** | **D** | **C+** |
| ***It was good to see "Tito" again, but will we ever see him in a big fight?*** | | | | | | |
| 4-5-98 | Kostya Tszyu KO 1 Calvin Grove | ESPN2 | jw | B- | F | C |
| *A no-brainer; what was used-up Grove doing at junior welter?* | | | | | | |
| 4-7-98 | Antwun Echols KO 9 Kevin Tillman | USA | m | B | B+ | A- |
| *Echols a comer in a dull division; Tillman game but out of his league* | | | | | | |
| 4-7-98 | Jimmy Thunder W 10 Tim Witherspoon | USA | h | C | A | C- |
| *'Spoon couldn't have asked for a clearer sign that the show is over* | | | | | | |

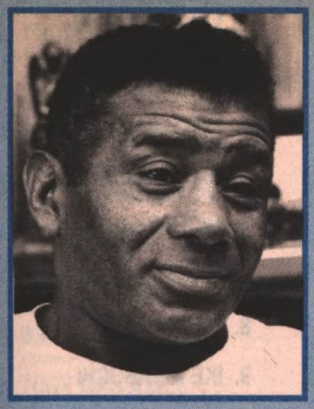
**Category Explanation:** "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

**Division key:** h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

**Network key:** PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime

# OUTSIDE THE ROPES



*Patterson: Former champ resigns*

Former world heavyweight champion **Floyd Patterson**, suffering from severe memory loss, resigned from his post as New York's athletic commissioner on April 1. During a March 20 deposition, Patterson was unable to recall that he had beaten **Archie Moore** to win his first heavyweight championship in 1956, and even admitted he sometimes can't remember his wife's name. Patterson, 63, had been commissioner since 1995 ... Two 30-year-old women, **Sherry Cole** and **Chevelle Butts**, announced on March 10 that they are suing **Mike Tyson** for $22.5-million over a March 1 incident at a Washington, D.C., restaurant. The women claim that after Tyson's sexual advances were rejected, he grabbed Cole, cursed Butts, and overturned a table before Butts threw hot coffee at him ... Female boxer **Jane Couch** of England won a sex discrimination suit in a London court on March 30, and will now be allowed to box in her homeland for the first time. At press time, she was considering filing a suit of more than $4-million against the British Boxing Board of Control, claiming their refusal to let her box cost her earnings and sponsorship ... **James Holyfield**, the older brother of WBA/IBF heavyweight champion **Evander Holyfield**, was convicted on March 24 of rape and child molestation and could face life in prison. Holyfield, 45, had been charged with rape three times previously, including a conviction for statutory rape and incest in 1995 ... 1976 U.S. Olympic boxing coach **Rolly Schwartz**, who had been involved in amateur boxing for more than 50 years, died on April 7. The Chicago native was 84 ... Former heavyweight champ **Joe Frazier** was charged with drunk driving in Philadelphia early in the morning on April 8. A breathalizer test determined Frazier's blood alcohol level to be between .05 and .10, but the ex-champ contended that the test was skewed by his high blood pressure.

*Couch: Can now box in England*

# THE PUNCHLINES

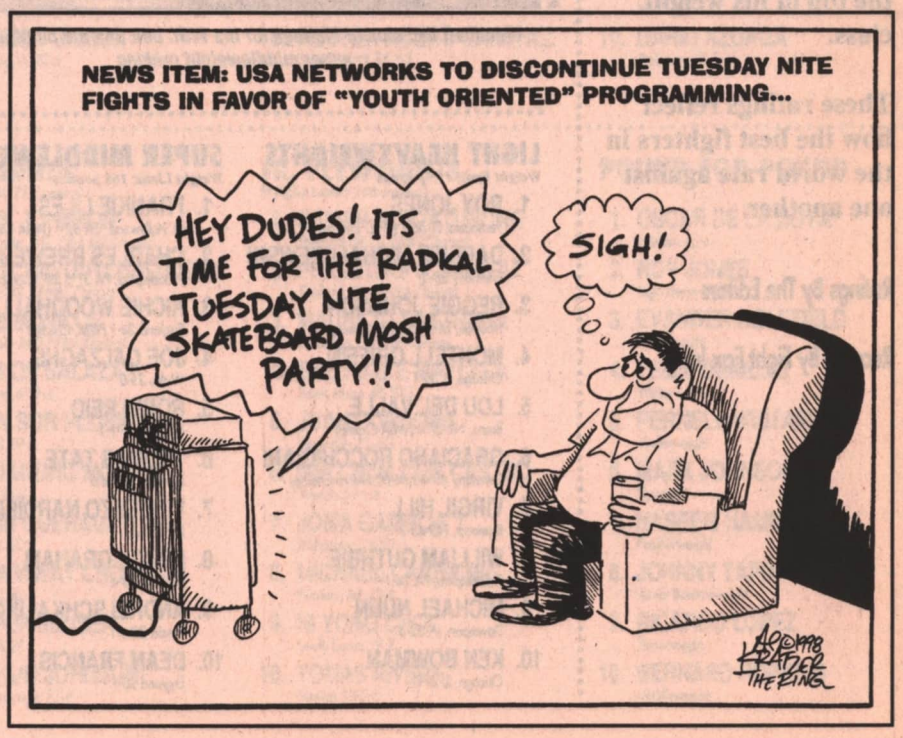
"The only fight for Holyfield is Lewis. Who cares if [WBA officials] strip him? Who cares about their belt? We'll go to Tiffany's or Harrod's and get a belt made up, real jewels, not plastic or glass—a real belt with real stuff on it—and give it to the winner."

—HBO Sports' Seth Abraham, responding to the announcement of the Evander Holyfield-Henry Akinwande fight

"When I fought Tony Tubbs, it was two big whales belly-bumping. It just happened that he hit me once more than I hit him, so they gave him the decision."

—Former WBA heavyweight champ Greg Page, reflecting on his title-losing effort against Tubbs

# AL KRATZER'S VIEW



# THE RING RATINGS

## *For Period Ended April 28, 1998*

## How Our Ratings Are Compiled

**In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.**

**Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.**

**These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.**

**Ratings By The Editors**

**Records By Fight Fax Inc.**

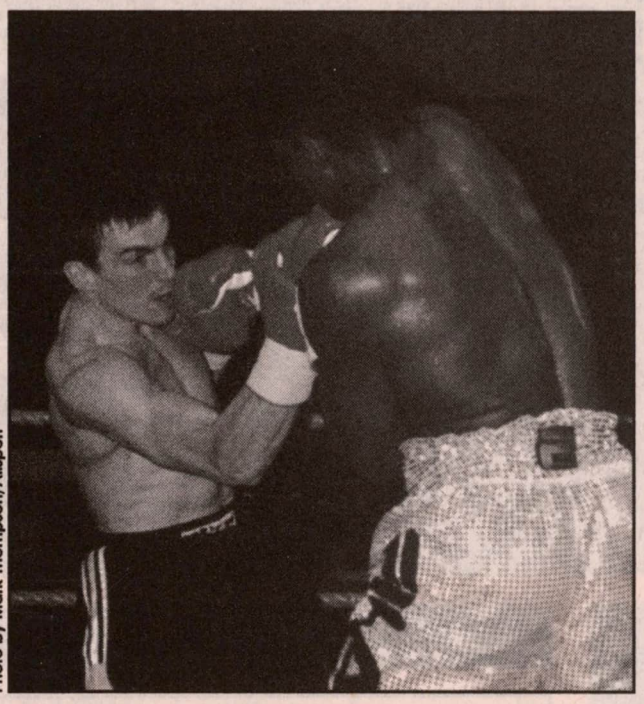


Photo by Mark Thompson/Allsport

***Woodhall decisioned Malinga for the WBC belt and the number-three super middleweight ranking***

### HEAVYWEIGHTS
*Weight Unlimited*

1. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
   Fairburn, GA *35-3 (WBA/IBF Champ)*
2. **LENNOX LEWIS**
   England *33-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **GEORGE FOREMAN**
   Marshall, TX *76-5*
4. **MICHAEL MOORER**
   Detroit, MI *39-2*
5. **RAY MERCER**
   West Orange, NJ *25-4-1*
6. **MICHAEL GRANT**
   Norristown, PA *27-0*
7. **SHANNON BRIGGS**
   New York, NY *31-2*
8. **CHRIS BYRD**
   Flint, MI *24-0*
9. **IKE IBEABUCHI**
   Dallas, TX *17-0*
10. **DAVID TUA**
    Totowa, NJ *30-1*

### CRUISERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 190 pounds*

1. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   France *38-1 (WBA Champ)*
2. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ**
   Germany *22-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **IMAMU MAYFIELD**
   New Brunswick, NJ *18-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ**
   Argentina *22-2-1*
5. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England *23-4*
6. **NATE MILLER**
   Philadelphia, PA *30-5*
7. **ROBERT DANIELS**
   Miami, FL *35-3-1*
8. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS**
   Las Vegas, NV *28-4-1*
9. **ADOLPHO WASHINGTON**
   Lexington, KY *26-5-2*
10. **DON DIEGO POEDER**
    Netherlands *21-0*

### LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
*Weight limit: 175 pounds*

1. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL *36-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany *38-0*
3. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX *37-5-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL *30-1*
5. **LOU DEL VALLE**
   Bronx, NY *27-1 (WBA Champ)*
6. **GRACIANO ROCCHIGIANI**
   Germany *40-4-1 (WBC Interim Champ)*
7. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND *43-3*
8. **WILLIAM GUTHRIE**
   Philadelphia, PA *24-1*
9. **MICHAEL NUNN**
   Davenport, IA *52-4*
10. **KEN BOWMAN**
    Chicago, IL *29-0*

### SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 168 pounds*

1. **FRANKIE LILES**
   N. Hollywood, CA *32-1 (WBA Champ)*
2. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA *31-5 (IBF Champ)*
3. **RICHIE WOODHALL**
   England *24-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales *25-0*
5. **ROBIN REID**
   England *25-1-1*
6. **THOMAS TATE**
   Houston, TX *34-5*
7. **VINCENZO NARDIELLO**
   Italy *33-6*
8. **HEROL GRAHAM**
   England *48-6*
9. **ANDREI SCHKALIKOV**
   Russia *29-4-1*
10. **DEAN FRANCIS**
    England *20-1*

### MIDDLEWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 160 pounds*

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Philadelphia, PA *34-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **KEITH HOLMES**
   Washington, D.C. *30-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. *25-1-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **OTIS GRANT**
   Canada *30-1-1*
5. **ROBERT McCRACKEN**
   England *31-0*
6. **LONNIE BRADLEY**
   New York, NY *26-0-1*
7. **JULIO CESAR GREEN**
   Brooklyn, NY *22-3*
8. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA *20-2-1*
9. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France *24-2-1*
10. **RYAN RHODES**
    England *16-1*

## JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 154 pounds*

1. **LAURENT BOUDOUANI**
   France 36-2-1 (WBA Champ)
2. **YORY BOY CAMPAS**
   Mexico 70-2 (IBF Champ)
3. **KEITH MULLINGS**
   Brooklyn, NY 16-4-1 (WBC Champ)
4. **TERRY NORRIS**
   Mission Valley, CA 47-7
5. **JULIO CESAR VASQUEZ**
   Argentina 60-3
6. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   St. Petersburg, FL 38-1
7. **RAUL MARQUEZ**
   Houston, TX 28-1
8. **BRONCO McKART**
   Monroe, MI 34-2
9. **TONY MARSHALL**
   Albany, NY 28-7-6
10. **EMMETT LINTON**
    Tacoma, WA 24-2

## WELTERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 147 pounds*

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Whittier, CA 27-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Norfolk, VA 41-2-1
3. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico 33-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **IKE QUARTEY**
   Ghana 34-0-1 (WBA Champ)
5. **JOSE LUIS LOPEZ**
   Mexico 40-3-2
6. **OBA CARR**
   Detroit, MI 45-2-1
7. **PATRICK CHARPENTIER**
   France 27-4-1
8. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 24-0
9. **WILFREDO RIVERA**
   Puerto Rico 27-3-1
10. **ANDREI PESTRIAEV**
    Russia 21-2

## JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 140 pounds*

1. **VINCE PHILLIPS**
   Las Vegas, NV 39-3 (IBF Champ)
2. **KHALID RAHILOU**
   France 32-2 (WBA Champ)
3. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 99-2-2
4. **MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 42-1-1
5. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia 20-1-1
6. **RAFAEL RUELAS**
   Studio City, CA 51-3
7. **HECTOR LOPEZ**
   Palmdale, CA 38-6-1
8. **JOHN-JOHN MOLINA**
   Puerto Rico 46-4
9. **REGGIE GREEN**
   Clinton, MD 27-2
10. **GIOVANNI PARISI**
    Italy 36-2-1

## LIGHTWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 135 pounds*

1. **ORZUBEK NAZAROV**
   Japan 26-0 (WBA Champ)
2. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 26-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 24-0 (WBC Champ)
4. **PHILLIP HOLIDAY**
   South Africa 31-1
5. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 29-2
6. **ISRAEL CARDONA**
   Hartford, CT 28-2
7. **AZUMAH NELSON**
   Ghana 39-4-2
8. **ARTUR GRIGORIJAN**
   Uzbekistan 24-0
9. **CESAR BAZAN**
   Mexico 31-2-1
10. **JAMES LEIJA**
    San Antonio, TX 35-3-2

## JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 130 pounds*

1. **GENARO HERNANDEZ**
   Los Angeles, CA 37-1-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN 23-2-1
3. **YONG SOO CHOI**
   South Korea 24-2-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **ROBERTO GARCIA**
   Oxnard, CA 30-0 (IBF Champ)
5. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 38-0-2
6. **TRACY PATTERSON**
   Highland, NY 60-5-1
7. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Austin, TX 22-1
8. **GABE RUELAS**
   Arleta, CA 44-4
9. **ARNULFO CASTILLO**
   Mexico 27-0-2
10. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
    Grand Rapids, MI 16-0

## FEATHERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 126 pounds*

1. **NASEEM HAMED**
   England 30-0
2. **LUISITO ESPINOSA**
   Philippines 42-7 (WBC Champ)
3. **FRED NORWOOD**
   St. Louis, MO 29-0-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **MANUEL MEDINA**
   Mexico 55-10 (IBF Champ)
5. **KEVIN KELLEY**
   Flushing, NY 47-2-2
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico 24-1
7. **ANGEL VAZQUEZ**
   Hartford, CT 15-0
8. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ**
   Puerto Rico 50-8-3
9. **HECTOR LIZARRAGA**
   Fresno, CA 34-9-5
10. **DERRICK GAINER**
    Pensacola, FL 22-4

## JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 122 pounds*

1. **VUYANI BUNGU**
   South Africa 34-2 (IBF Champ)
2. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 29-0 (WBC Champ)
3. **KENNEDY McKINNEY**
   Memphis, TN 33-3-1
4. **JUNIOR JONES**
   Brooklyn, NY 44-3
5. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Mexico 44-2
6. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH**
   Las Vegas, NV 21-1
7. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ**
   Mexico 24-0 (WBA Champ)
8. **MBULELO BOTILE**
   South Africa 22-1
9. **RAFAEL DEL VALLE**
   Puerto Rico 23-2-1
10. **HECTOR ACERO-SANCHEZ**
    Brooklyn, NY 37-5-3

## BANTAMWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 118 pounds*

1. **TIM AUSTIN**
   Cincinnati, OH 18-0-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **NANA KONADU**
   Ghana 38-3 (WBA Champ)
3. **JOICHIRO TATSUYOSHI**
   Japan 16-4-1 (WBC Champ)
4. **SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASSUK**
   Thailand 16-1
5. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO**
   Colombia 38-1
6. **PAULIE AYALA**
   Ft. Worth, TX 23-0
7. **VEERAPHOL SAHAPROM**
   Thailand 15-1
8. **DAORUNG C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 61-6-3
9. **ADAN VARGAS**
   Mexico 26-1-1
10. **DARIO AZUAGA**
    Paraguay 41-0-1

## JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 115 pounds*

1. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
   Albuquerque, NM 43-0-2 (IBF Champ)
2. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines 39-1-2 (WBC Champ)
3. **SATOSHI IIDA**
   Japan 23-1-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **YOKTHAI SITHOAR**
   Thailand 14-1-1
5. **HYUNG CHUL LEE**
   South Korea 19-6
6. **HAROLD GREY**
   Colombia 21-2
7. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia 23-0
8. **RATANACHAI DUTCHBOY GYM**
   Thailand 25-3
9. **JULIO GAMBOA**
   Nicaragua 21-2
10. **JOEL LUNA ZARATE**
    Mexico 32-2-2

## FLYWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 112 pounds*

1. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 34-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **CHATCHAI DUTCHBOY GYM**
   Thailand 32-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **JOSE BONILLA**
   Venezuela 24-3 (WBA Champ)
4. **CARLOS SALAZAR**
   Argentina 47-7-3
5. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand 29-1
6. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 36-3
7. **DAVID GUERAULT**
   France 12-0
8. **CHOKVIWAT CHOKCHAI**
   Thailand 30-3
9. **JESPER JENSEN**
   Denmark 27-1
10. **ARTHUR JOHNSON**
    East St. Louis, IL 17-4

## JR. FLYWEIGHTS
*Weight Limit: 108 pounds*

1. **SAMAN SORJATURONG**
   Thailand 38-2-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **PHICHITNOI C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 19-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 17-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **BABY JAKE MATLALA**
   South Africa 48-10-2
5. **JUAN CORDOBA**
   Argentina 31-4-3
6. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
   Mexico 50-5-4
7. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 23-3-1
8. **MICHAEL CARBAJAL**
   Phoenix, AZ 45-4
9. **HI YONG CHOI**
   South Korea 19-2
10. **TOMAS RIVERA**
    Mexico 14-3-2

## POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Welterweight
2. **ROY JONES**
   Light Heavyweight
3. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
   Heavyweight
4. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Welterweight
5. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Welterweight
6. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Flyweight
7. **NASEEM HAMED**
   Featherweight
8. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
   Junior Bantamweight
9. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Strawweight
10. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
    Middleweight

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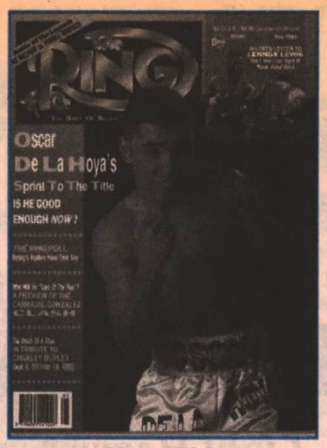


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| ☐ Nov/83 | ☐ Jun/86 | ☐ Jan/89 | ☐ Nov/91 | ☐ Dec/94 | ☐ Apr/97 |
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# NEW FACES

# KENNY BOWMAN

## *Light Heavyweight*

**By Joe Santoliquito**

## PRO RECORD

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1991** | | |
| Jan. 4 | Marris Virgil, Chicago | W 4 |
| June 15 | Ben Judah, Chicago | KO 2 |
| Nov. 29 | L.C. Robinson, Madison, WI | KO 1 |
| Dec. 13 | Marris Virgil, Chicago | KO 1 |
| **1992** | | |
| Jan. 24 | Bari Abdullah, Chicago | KO 1 |
| Feb. 7 | Lonnie Knowles, Madison | KO 1 |
| Feb. 28 | Tyrone Mack, Chicago | KO 1 |
| March 27 | Jake Torrance, Chicago | W 6 |
| June 20 | John Collier, Chicago | KO 2 |
| July 24 | Art Davis, Chicago | KO 2 |
| Oct. 3 | Jerome Kelly, Chicago | KO 1 |
| Dec. 5 | Randy Smith, Chicago | W 8 |
| **1993** | | |
| Feb. 5 | Don Penelton, Madison | KO 4 |
| Feb. 26 | Willie Perry, Chicago | W 8 |
| May 15 | Frank Newton, Madison | KO 1 |
| June 25 | Eric French, Chicago | W 8 |
| Aug. 27 | Anthony Campbell, Chicago | KO 2 |
| Nov. 23 | Frank Rhodes, Chicago | W 12 |
| **1997** | | |
| Aug. 5 | James Mullins, Nashville, TN | W 4 |
| Aug. 12 | Guy Stanford, Nashville | KO 4 |
| Aug. 19 | Anthony Evans, Nashville | KO 1 |
| Aug. 26 | Mario Hereford, Nashville | No-Contest 2 |
| Sept. 2 | Mario Hereford, Nashville | KO 1 |
| Sept. 16 | Marcus McCaleb, Nashville | KO 1 |
| Sept. 23 | Tyrone Bledsoe, Nashville | KO 1 |
| Oct. 28 | Christopher Capps, Nashville | KO 1 |
| Nov. 4 | James Mullins, Nashville | KO 2 |
| Nov. 18 | Reginald Strickland, Nashville | W 4 |
| Nov. 25 | William McDonald, Nashville | No-Contest 1 |
| **1998** | | |
| Jan. 20 | James Mullins, Nashville | KO 4 |
| March 3 | Merqui Sosa, Corpus Christi, TX | W 12 |

| FIGHTS | WON | LOST | DREW | NO-CONTEST | KOs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 20 |

They got on the bus as mother and son, but they quickly became, in the mind of one passenger, the deaf-and-dumb lady with the boy. Seconds passed, maybe minutes, Kenny Bowman doesn't really recall. All he remembers was the same hand he used to communicate with his mother began to gradually curl into a fist. His mother couldn't hear, but Bowman did, as the grunts of the ignorant man across from them started to become obvious. No way would he allow someone to mock his mother, not in front of him, not ever.

*So his mother was deaf*, Bowman thought. *That idiot had no right making funny sounds.* Then it happened. The 14-year-old Bowman reached a boiling point and exploded in a frenzy of wild swings at the older man. Just as suddenly, he felt the grasp of his mother's hand pulling him back, and out of any possible danger. That narrow bus aisle became Bowman's first boxing ring.

"In a way, that's what got me into boxing," said Bowman, now ranked number eight as a light heavyweight by both the IBF and WBC. "I just started swinging at the guy, and my mother decided then, she had to do something to get me into a gym. I was too out of control. My temper would get so bad, I was knocking out grown men, and I was just a kid."

The son of two deaf parents (his father and mother divorced when he was six years old), Bowman grew up in a constant current of ridicule. The incident on the bus was merely one of many that Bowman had to endure. Every time he fights, his opponent represents someone who used to belch out obnoxious noises when Bowman would use sign language to speak to his mother in public. This explains why Bowman was yelling, "Mama, Mama,"

Photo by Frank Vitucci

and making gestures with his hands under his mouth following his 12-round, split-decision victory over veteran light heavyweight contender Merqui Sosa on USA Network's *Tuesday Night Fights* in March. It was the biggest victory of his career, and the one way he could share his joy with his mother, who was at ringside.

The impressive win improved his record to 29-0 (20). It also made Bowman a legitimate contender in the 175-pound division, a division in need of a star to contend with Roy Jones. Bowman, 30, was rocked a few times by Sosa, even knocked down in the fourth, but he showed resilience, a consistent jab, and some power of his own to outhustle Sosa in a free-swinging encounter.

Bowman owes much of his determination to his upbringing. There wasn't a day that would

*(Continued on page 60)*

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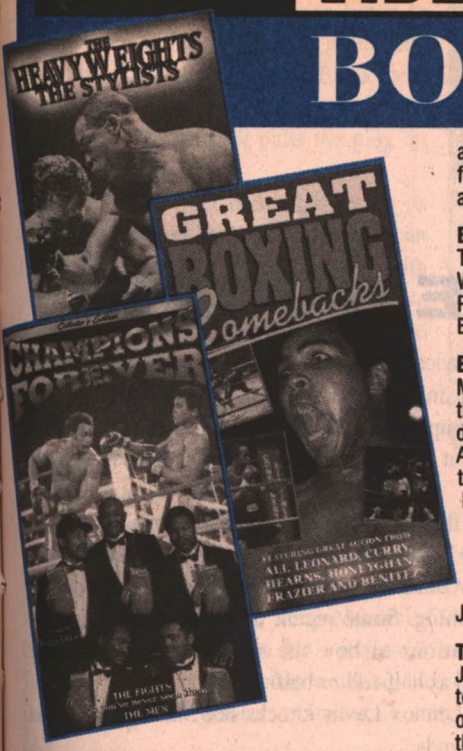


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# RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

## KICKING THE BUCKET

With the exception of most of the bouts broadcast by Don Dunphy and most of the trunks worn by Muhammad Ali, very little in boxing has ever been black-and-white. And how could it be? Complex personalities match up amid a tangled web of conflicting political interests, subjective judging, and rules forever open to interpretation. Ulterior motives abound. Agendas lie hidden everywhere.

Consequently, when they're giving their take on the fight game's latest development, it's usually not easy to discount the optimist *or* the pessimist. Those gray areas can lead people to reach different conclusions even when they're watching the same thing. Some recent developments are perfect illustrations of how the spit bucket can often be viewed as half-full *or* half-empty:

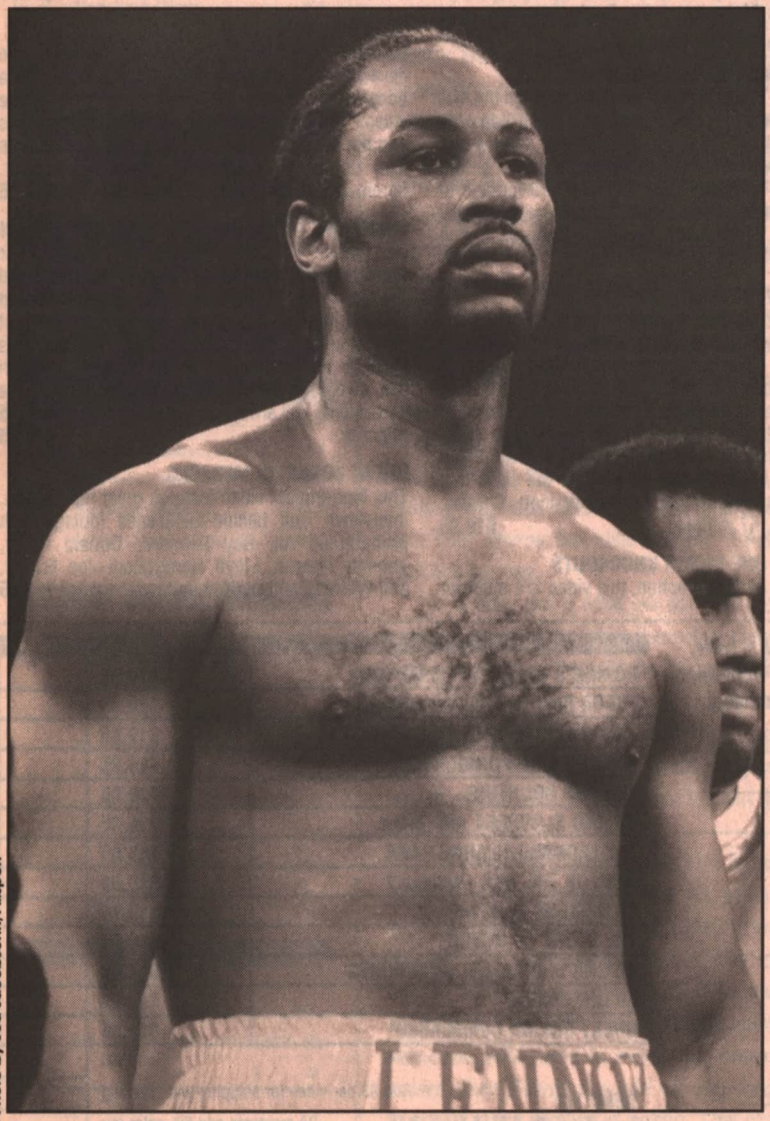


Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

*Beating Briggs made Lewis the linear heavyweight champ*

1) Lennox Lewis knocks out Shannon Briggs in five rounds.

Half-full: Lewis, who grabbed the WBC belt the first time by fetching it out of a trash can and then regained it when Oliver McCall had an apparent nervous breakdown right in the middle of combat, *finally* won a title that means something. And for a change, he won it convincingly. In my mind, Lewis is *the* heavyweight champion of the world because he beat Briggs, the linear titlist.

Now a superfight against Evander Holyfield will be for more than just alphabet designations, chintzy-looking hardware, and bragging rights to number one—it'll also be for the linear crown that all of history's great big men have worn. In the biggest matchup the heavyweight division can offer at this time, isn't that the prize that *should* be on the line?

Half-empty: Except for me and one or two other writers, no one in the press made mention of the linear angle of Lewis-Briggs. Not even the victor talked about it. To most people, Lewis-Briggs was just another predictable mismatch. One that, unfortunately, forced Holyfield to keep busy by taking his own tuneup against—*ugh!*—Henry Akinwande.

Lewis had an off-night, was rocked in the opening round, appeared sloppy and uninspired, and still needed just five rounds to blast Briggs to the canvas three times and render him helpless. That says something about the gap between the two-man upper echelon of the division and everybody else. We're looking at a weight class that's about as deep as a conversation with Pamela Lee.

My bottom line: In the long run, Lewis KO 5 Briggs will be good for the division. When Holyfield beats Lewis later this year, "The Real Deal" won't have to listen to Briggs stand on the sidelines, pound his chest, and claim to be the rightful descendant of Muhammad Ali.

2) The USA Network pulls the plug on *Tuesday Night Fights*.

Half-full: The cable network is ending its 17-year fight series in August so that it can run programming that is more popular with young viewers. Cost-cutting is said to have not played a role in USA's decision. And how could it? Judging by the quality of the fights, the budget for some USA cards couldn't have been more than the price of one of the Albert brothers' fancier toupees. Every once in a while, USA featured solid matchups like Bernard Hopkins-Andrew Council or Arthur Williams-Adolpho Washington. But most of the time, the best it could offer was junk like John-John Molina-Moses James, Tim Witherspoon-Levi Billups, Tony Marshall-Orin Osbey, or Israel Cardona-Sam Girard. There are a thousand better ways to spend Tuesday evenings at home than watching blowouts and no-names. Defrosting the refrigerator immediately comes to mind. R.I.P., USA.

Half-empty: With boxing on commercial TV a rarity, it's nearly impossible for fighters to build national followings the way Ray Mancini, Livingstone Bramble, Edwin Rosario, Aaron Pryor, and Vinny Pazienza did in the '80s. USA's demise means one less place for up-and-coming talent to be showcased and one less outlet for fight fans who can't afford to order overpriced pay-per-view shows or subscribe to HBO and Showtime. USA provided the opportunity to see world title bouts and connect faces to many of the less-familiar names in the world ratings. And over the years, USA's Sean O'Grady developed into one of the best fight analysts in the industry.

My bottom line: It's bad news. One TV appearance can do more for a young fighter's career than 20 clubfights covered only in print. Two-paragraph fight reports with a tiny picture are not the way we fight connoisseurs want to get our news and form our opinions. It's like trying to forecast the next World Series winner simply by reading box scores.

3) Boxing plays prime-time on Oscar Night.

Half-full: The Sweet Science never gets prime-time exposure on the commercial networks anymore, so anytime it gets a chance to play to the mainstream, it's a treat. (Before FOX showed the Yory Boy Campas-Anthony Stephens card on March 23, there had been just one live, prime-time fight aired on free TV in 13 *years*.) Having Oscar De La Hoya host the festivities no doubt drew more female viewers than a regular fight card would have.

Half-empty: Was this really a night of boxing, or a De La Hoya highlight film disguised as a fight card? Leave it to Bob Arum. He has two hours of coveted prime time at his disposal, so, of course, he has to supplement a world title fight with a glorified infomercial, Butterbean's carnival act, and a women's bout. Gotta wheel out those sideshow attractions, lest the audience mistakenly think they were actually watching a sporting event and not a sitcom.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

***De La Hoya and Clancy: A FOX(y) looking couple***

The De La Hoya retrospective was all just a big tease. In the good old days, ABC ran similar highlight packages and interviews as a prelude to featuring a superstar on the network. That wasn't the case here. Viewers have as much chance of seeing "The Golden Boy" on free TV in the future as they do of seeing Butterbean fight at welterweight.

My bottom line: Angelo Dundee once said the worst sound in the sport is silence, and I'll concede that any live, prime-time boxing is better than none. At least it reminds the masses that, despite rumors to the contrary, the fight game hasn't gone out of business.

4) *GQ* honors Muhammad Ali.

Half-full: In naming Ali the Athlete of the Century in its April '98 issue, the magazine put together a 24-page tribute that included 33 previously unpublished photos by Neil Leifer, writer extraordinaire John Schulian's overview of the heavyweight king's career, and a profile of today's Ali by Peter Richmond. Fascinating reading, particularly the perspective on "The Greatest" offered by the likes of Jim Brown ("Ali didn't let his occupation curtail his soul.") and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar ("His brilliance in the ring or his moral fortitude alone would have made him a memorable man. And he had both.")

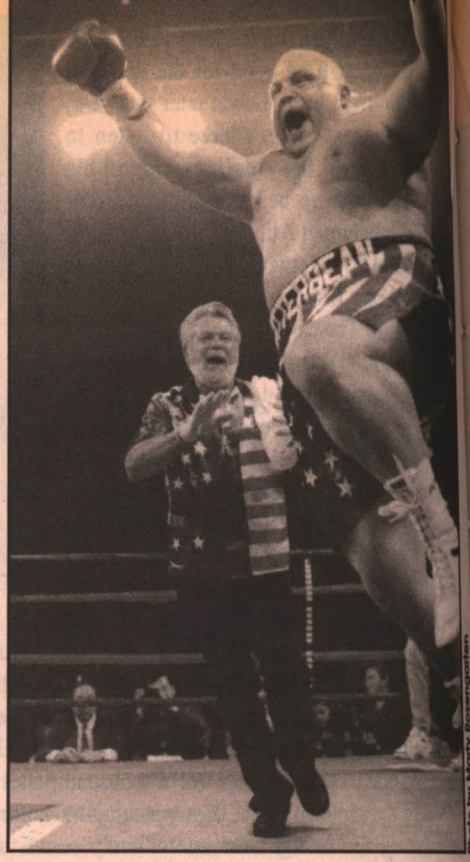
Half-empty: Another story about Ali trembling while trying to eat, shuffling from room to room in his Michigan home, and taking an eternity to answer his interviewer's questions. And another story that tells us how much Ali is enjoying life and how he is more "godly" today than he ever was in the ring. Just once, in somebody's article, can we hear *Ali* tell us how great his life has become?

My bottom line: Upbeat writing, cute anecdotes, and flashes of the old Ali shining through for a moment here and a moment there will never convince me that the most famous man on earth isn't tortured by his inability to talk, walk, and interact with people the way he once did.

At the age of 55, Ali should have been the world's ambassador, the epitome of the human spirit. Instead, he is a reminder of the frailty of the human body. ■

# CAMERA CLICKS

*He kinda looks like King Kong preparing to ravage a small village, doesn't he? But, alas, it's just Butterbean, transformed temporarily into a jumping bean, celebrating his third-round knockout of "Cowboy" Bill Eaton in March. He sure would look great, though, swatting at airplanes with his gloved fists while clinging to the Empire State Building.*



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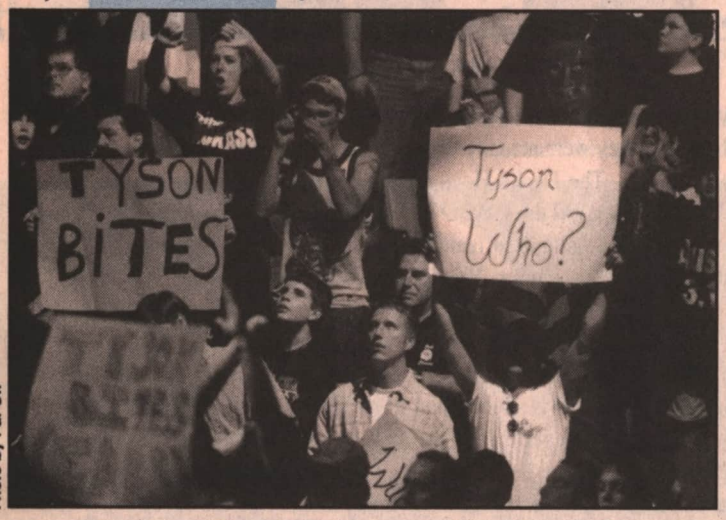



Photo by Pat Orr

*Mike Tyson wasn't particularly popular among fans at WrestleMania XIV in Boston, as evidenced by the myriad signs brought to the event, as well as the "Holy-field!" chant that went up during the show. If ever anyone was easy for the WWF to portray as a bad guy, it was Iron Mike.*

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

*Marvelous Marvin Hagler was one of the few great fighters able to walk away from the sport in his prime, so you can't blame him for wanting to step back into the spotlight every now and then. Prior to the Lennox Lewis-Shannon Briggs fight in Atlantic City in March, Hagler stepped into the ring to acknowledge the crowd after Michael Buffer announced the former middleweight champ's presence.*

*Yory Boy Campas promised that his headdress would return when he made his first defense of the IBF junior middleweight title, and he most certainly didn't disappoint. With his dancing, deer-head sporting shaman in his corner as well, Campas stopped challenger Anthony Stephens in only three rounds.*

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

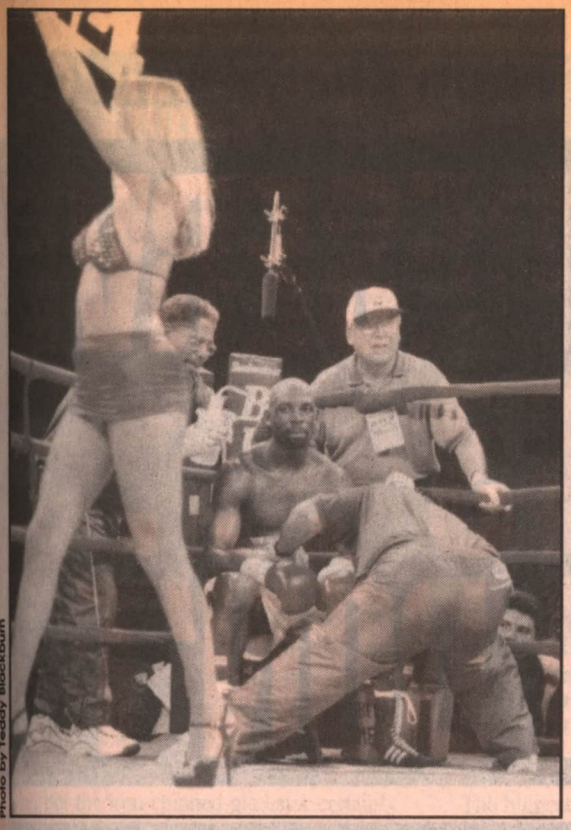


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

*Why did WBA super middleweight champ Frank Liles struggle so much in his April title defense against Andrei Schkalikov? The evidence at hand shows that Liles may have been suffering from a lack of focus. At least his corner didn't have to remind him what round it was.*

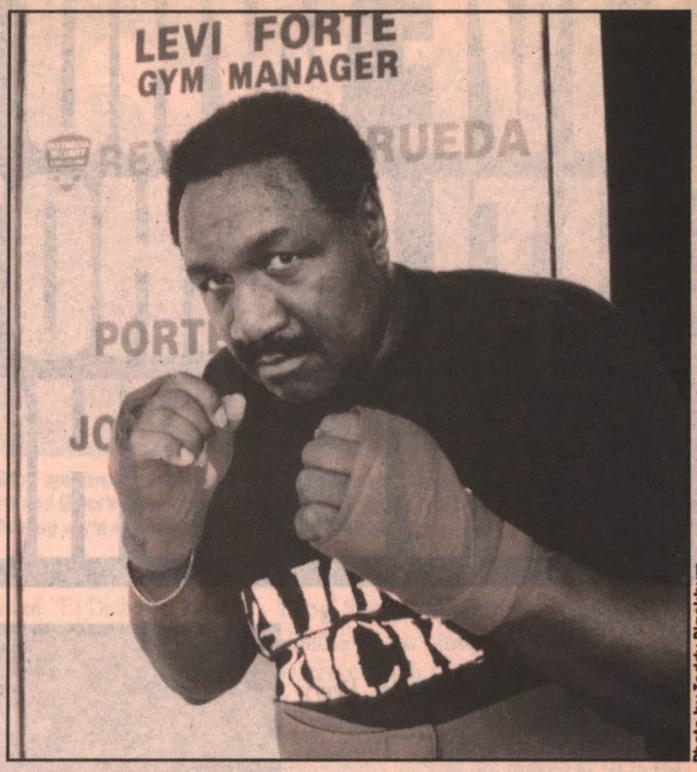



Photo by Teddy Blackburn

*On the comeback trail: Levi Forte, who lost a decision to George Foreman in Miami Beach in 1969, has his hands wrapped in anticipation of a rematch on the 30th anniversary next year. Sadly, such a fight would probably sell quite well.*

Photo by Monty Rosenquist

*Olympic bronze medalist Antonio Tarver is introduced as "The Magic Man," and boxing purists would no doubt be glad to see him make this outfit disappear. Among Tarver's most magical techniques are pulling a rabbit punch out of his hat and using bodyshots to saw opponents in half.*

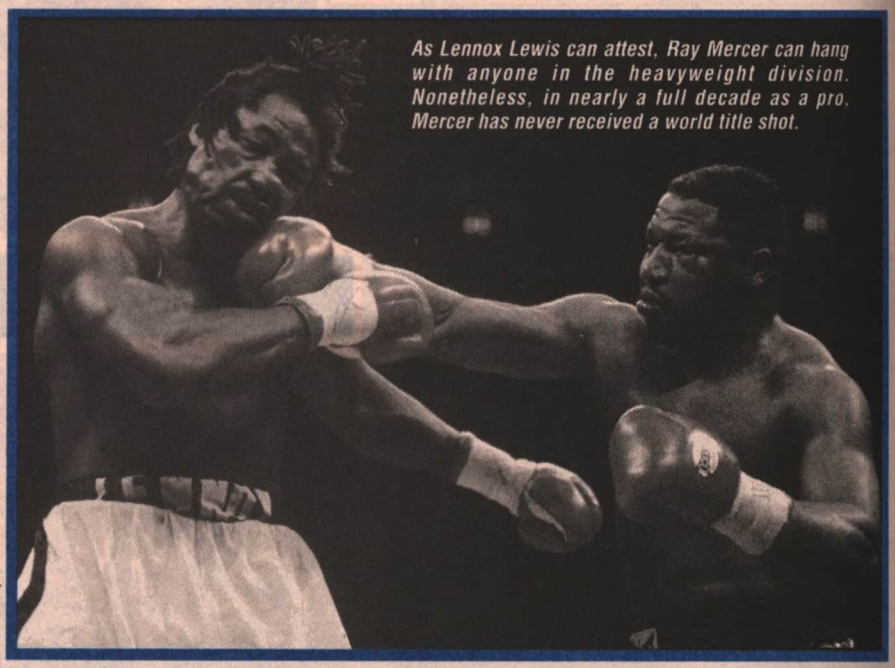
## NOSTALGIA CORNER

*Remember that scene in Rocky where Sylvester Stallone has to try to catch a chicken? Well, welterweight champion Barney Ross had it much easier while training for a 1936 title defense, as he had dozens of turkeys to go after.*

## Separating The Contenders From The Pretenders

# FIVE WHO DESERVE TITLE SHOTS . . . FIVE WHO DON'T

**By Eric Raskin**



*As Lennox Lewis can attest, Ray Mercer can hang with anyone in the heavyweight division. Nonetheless, in nearly a full decade as a pro, Mercer has never received a world title shot.*

*What do Shannon Briggs, Henry Akinwande, Patrick Charpentier, and Mahenge Zulu have in common? Well, they all were granted world title shots in the first half of 1998. But more specifically, they all had no business challenging for those world titles.*

*Briggs was awarded a shot at Lennox Lewis for running from a 48-year-old man for 12 rounds and capturing a decision virtually nobody thought he deserved. Akinwande disgraced himself by turning in the ultimate non-effort against Lewis, then became the mandatory challenger to Evander Holyfield by outpointing washed-up, blown-up Orlin Norris. Charpentier and Zulu feasted on obscure European competition—somehow managing a few losses each along the way—and found themselves listed as mandatory challengers to Oscar De La Hoya and Felix Trinidad, respectively.*

*None of the three organizations with world title status escapes blame for these mandatory disasters, as the WBA made Akinwande their number one, the WBC pumped up Charpentier, and the IBF made Zulu their top contender. Briggs is a different story, as Lewis' people chose him because his orange dreadlocks made him marketable and, frankly, there weren't too many other guys to choose from. Still, like the others, Briggs had done nothing to deserve a title fight. You'd better believe John Houseman would be convulsing in his grave if he heard any of these four try to claim they "earrrned" their shots at the gold.*

*But the disparity between who deserves title shots and who actually gets the opportunities is nothing new. This kind of nonsense dates back to even long before Pete Rademacher challenged heavyweight champ Floyd Patterson in his first pro fight. And while we don't doubt it will continue, that doesn't stop us from pointing out the most glaring errors in the title fight scheduling process. This article identifies five men who truly deserve a crack at a title but aren't being rewarded, as well as five fighters who, for one reason or another, are in position for a title try without deserving it. So much for doing things "the old-fashioned way."*

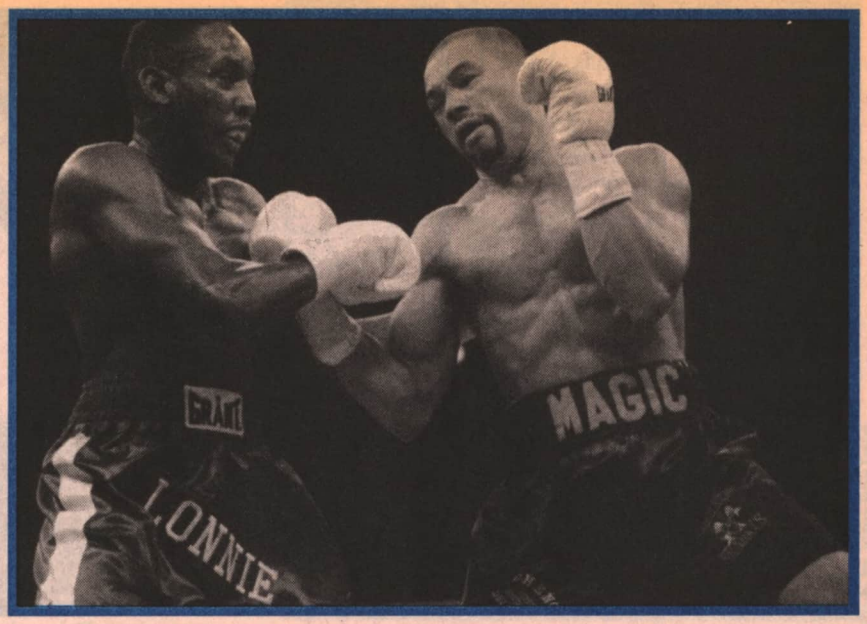
## FIVE WHO DESERVE A TITLE SHOT

### Ray Mercer

At the age of 37, Mercer has done everything possible to prove he deserves a world title shot. That's not to say the '88 Olympic gold medalist's career hasn't featured some shoddy performances and embarrassing debacles (most notably, his alleged mid-fight bribe against Jesse Ferguson), but the good far outweighs the bad.

Mercer, 25-4-1 (17), knocked out unbeaten Tommy Morrison in five rounds in 1991. He gave the current heavyweight champions, Holyfield and Lewis, extremely tough fights when neither man held a belt, only to lose a pair of close decisions. In his last significant fight, Mercer captured a close decision over Tim Witherspoon, at a time when 'Spoon was not nearly as washed-up as he is today.

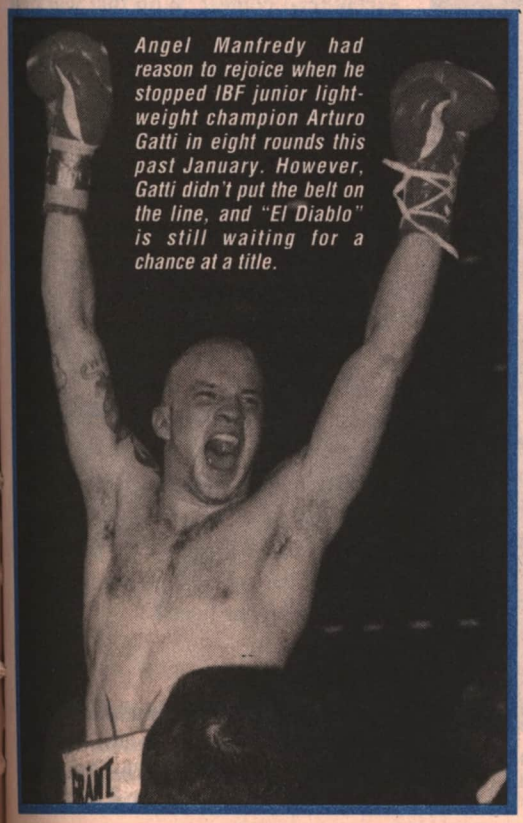
Mercer may be inconsistent and, at times, lazy, but the iron-chinned gladiator certainly should have gotten a title shot by now. After all, besides each other, who can really push Holyfield and Lewis like Mercer can? Mercer's running out of time, and it would be a crime if "Merciless" went through his entire career without being granted a single chance to grab the brass ring.




***Middleweight Otis Grant appeared to have done enough to decision Lonnie Bradley last year, but the fight was ruled a draw and Grant's career hasn't quite taken off like it should have. Grant would have an excellent chance of beating world champions William Joppy or Keith Holmes.***

### Angel Manfredy

The biggest win of "El Diablo's" career was, in many ways, the worst thing that could have happened to him. He had been calling out then-IBF junior lightweight champion Arturo Gatti for months, but when Gatti agreed to fight Manfredy, he required that it be an over-the-weight non-title contest. Manfredy decided to take what he could get, and stopped the favored Gatti on cuts in the eighth round with an exceptional performance. Big win, right? The final hurdle to a title shot, right? More like too good for his own good. It was the kind of display you need to save for when a title is at stake, because now, none of the 130-pound champions are particularly eager to risk their belts against Manfredy.



*Angel Manfredy had reason to rejoice when he stopped IBF junior lightweight champion Arturo Gatti in eight rounds this past January. However, Gatti didn't put the belt on the line, and "El Diablo" is still waiting for a chance at a title.*

Manfredy, 23-2-1 (19), may look like something out of a freakshow with his devil's mask and plethora of tattoos, but there's nothing bizarre about the way he fights. He's a smart, well-schooled boxer who makes up for his lack of pure punching power with an impenetrable chin. If Gatti's best bombs couldn't make El Diablo blink, how are the reigning junior lightweight champs—Genaro Hernandez, Roberto Garcia, and Yong Soo Choi—going to hurt him? Manfredy hasn't lost in four years, and has beaten enough top fighters, like Calvin Grove, Wilson Rodriguez, Jorge Paez, and Gatti, to deserve a go at a world title. Nonetheless, he was not ranked at all in the ratings of the WBC, WBA, or IBF at press time, presumably because of some prejudice they have against the meaningless WBU title he holds. Manfredy is already a world champ in the minds of most fans, and it's high time he gets a chance to make it official.

### Otis Grant

In March of '97, Grant seemed to have narrowly defeated WBO middleweight champion Lonnie Bradley, until the official scorecards deemed the bout a split draw. And what was Grant's reward for turning in a fine performance against a top-notch, previously undefeated fighter like Bradley? The Canadian was dropped from the WBA and IBF rankings for competing for a rival organization's belt. (He was ranked 12th by the WBC at press time.) Nine months later, Grant outfought another unbeaten opponent, Ryan Rhodes, and escaped with a narrow victory on the Englishman's home soil. But, alas, this bout was also sanctioned by the WBO—it was for the interim title—so Grant's standing with the top alphabet organizations hasn't improved any.

Save for the Bradley draw and a 12th-round knockout at the hands of Quincy Taylor in 1994, Grant's record is spotless, and his abilities in the ring almost as sterling. His game is well-rounded, and his defense is extremely difficult to penetrate. While IBF champion Bernard Hopkins is, without question, the top dog in the middleweight division, WBA champ William Joppy and WBC titlist Keith Holmes would both be susceptible against a polished fighter like Grant. At 30 years of age, Grant, 30-1-1 (17), is hitting his stride, but the bigger-name, past-their-prime fighters like Simon Brown, Paul Vaden, and, somehow, Roberto Duran, are the ones getting title shots. And with Grant looking toward a rematch with Bradley, it seems his title shot isn't going to come anytime soon.

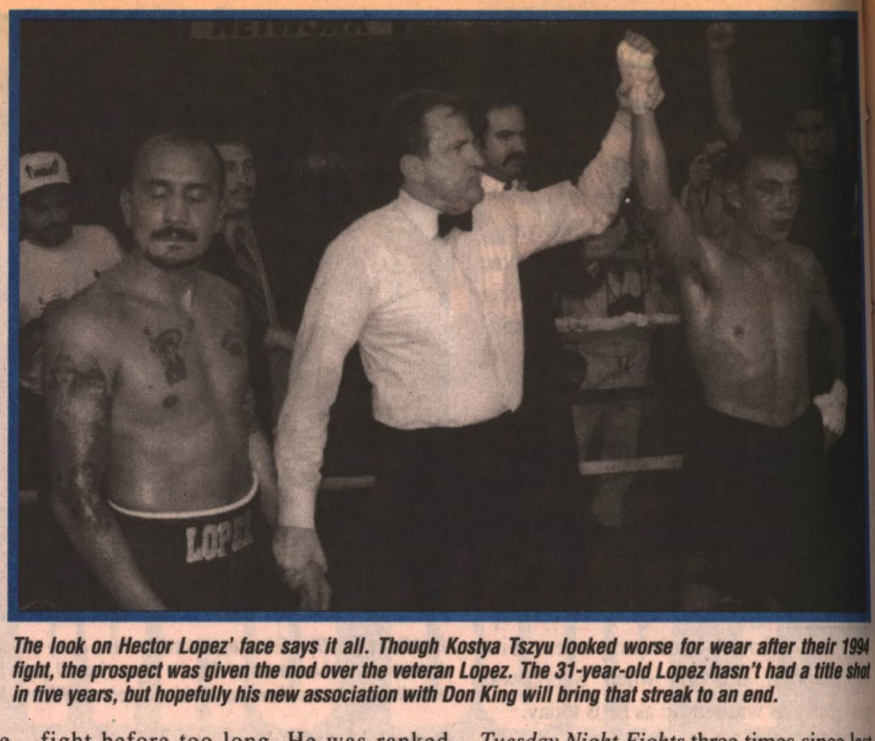


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

*The look on Hector Lopez' face says it all. Though Kostya Tszyu looked worse for wear after their 1994 fight, the prospect was given the nod over the veteran Lopez. The 31-year-old Lopez hasn't had a title shot in five years, but hopefully his new association with Don King will bring that streak to an end.*

## Tony Marshall

Marshall is a slightly different case than the others because there is a reasonable chance the junior middleweight from Guyana will find himself in a world title fight before too long. He was ranked fourth by both the WBC and WBA at press time, and has been getting great exposure by fighting—extremely well—on USA's *Tuesday Night Fights* three times since last fall. First, he took the NABF 154-pound title from Steve Martinez in September '97, dominating his way to a unanimous decision. Then, Marshall knocked down prospect Orin Osbey four times en route to an eighth-round knockout in January. And most recently, Marshall kayoed comebacking Anthony Jones in the 11th round of an exceptional contest. With that win over Jones, who had been on a major roll since returning to the ring in 1997, Marshall served notice that he's got what it takes to beat any junior middle in the world.

*No matter how often he disgraces himself and the sport of boxing, Mike Tyson will never have trouble getting a shot at a world title. In fact, many speculate that the Evander Holyfield-Lennox Lewis fight isn't happening because Holyfield is holding out for Tyson.*

And that includes reigning WBC champion Keith Mullings. Marshall won a 10-round decision over "Brooklyn Keith" on May 30, 1997, and though Mullings' style—blocking punches with his forehead—makes it difficult for him to win decisions, the mere fact that Marshall went the distance with the man who brutalized Raul Marquez and shockingly kayoed Terry Norris says something. With both men looking so spectacular recently, a Marshall-Mullings rematch seems a natural. And though Marshall's record of 28-7-6 (11) isn't the prettiest one in boxing, beyond the numbers lies an outstanding, deserving fighter.

## Hector Lopez

The best way to describe Lopez' stormy career, both literally and figuratively, is "down, but not out." The phrase rings true in the literal sense because the

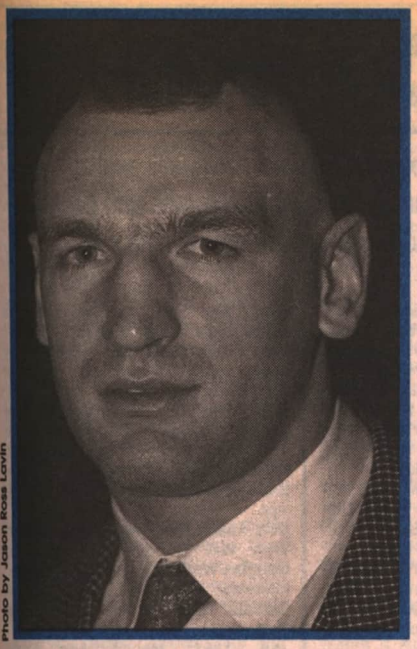


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

*Is Zeljko Mavrovic the next heavyweight champion of the world? Don't bet on it. He will, however, be the next challenger to the WBC belt held by Lewis.*

California resident has never been knocked out in 45 fights. But it's also applicable in a broader sense, as he's been suspended from boxing twice, jailed once in the middle of his career, and lost close, controversial decisions in several of the biggest fights of his career, only to remain a contender throughout this decade. The junior welterweight just won't go away, fueled by a love for competition and a desire to wear a belt.

Many of the losses on his 38-6-1 (19) record have been tough to swallow. There was the questionable decision in his only world title try, against Miguel Angel Gonzalez in 1993. In '94, Kostya Tszyu captured a decision Lopez felt should have gone his way, and then the same thing happened against Alfonso Sanchez in '95. Lopez' victory over rising star Israel Cardona last year might have put him in position for a title fight, were it not for the fact that his affiliation with Forum Boxing and not a major promoter gave the alphabet groups an excuse to ignore him (though Lopez' recent defection to Don King's stable may change all that). Lopez has always been a guy who's made his own second chances, but now it's up to boxing's powers-that-be to see to it that such a fine career includes more than just one shot at the gold.

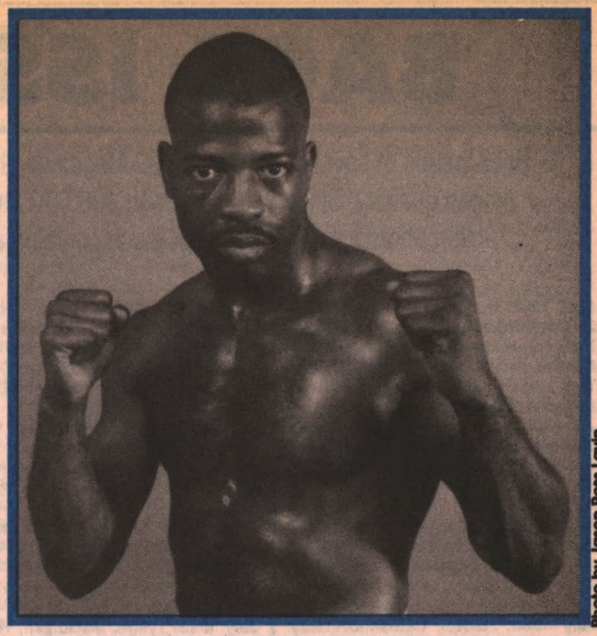


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

*Vince Pettway was at his peak after knocking out Simon Brown in Landover, Maryland, in 1995. Three years later, Pettway is far from being a championship-caliber fighter, yet he's the number-one contender to IBF welterweight champ Felix Trinidad.*

## FIVE WHO DON'T DESERVE A TITLE SHOT

### Mike Tyson

There were a lot of question marks surrounding Tyson at press time, such as whether he wants to return to boxing, and whether the Nevada State Athletic Commission will let him. But assuming "Iron Mike" does come back, a title shot is his just as soon as he wants it. He's still the biggest name in the sport, and he always earns opponents their biggest purses. That's why Tyson can have a date with Holyfield or Lewis just by snapping his fingers.

But being a logical challenger is not the same as being a deserving challenger. Frank Bruno is the best opponent Tyson's beaten since his return from prison, and even in today's mediocre heavyweight division, there are numerous fighters better than Bruno ever was. Today's Tyson wouldn't last three rounds against the Tyson of 10 years ago. His boxing skills have all but eroded, and all that remains is an intimidator with a good punch. That's not to say Tyson, 45-3 (39), can never be a legitimate contender again; he just needs to prove himself against someone who is a real contender, someone like Ray Mercer or Andrew Golota, before he should get a shot at a belt.

*(Continued on page 61)*

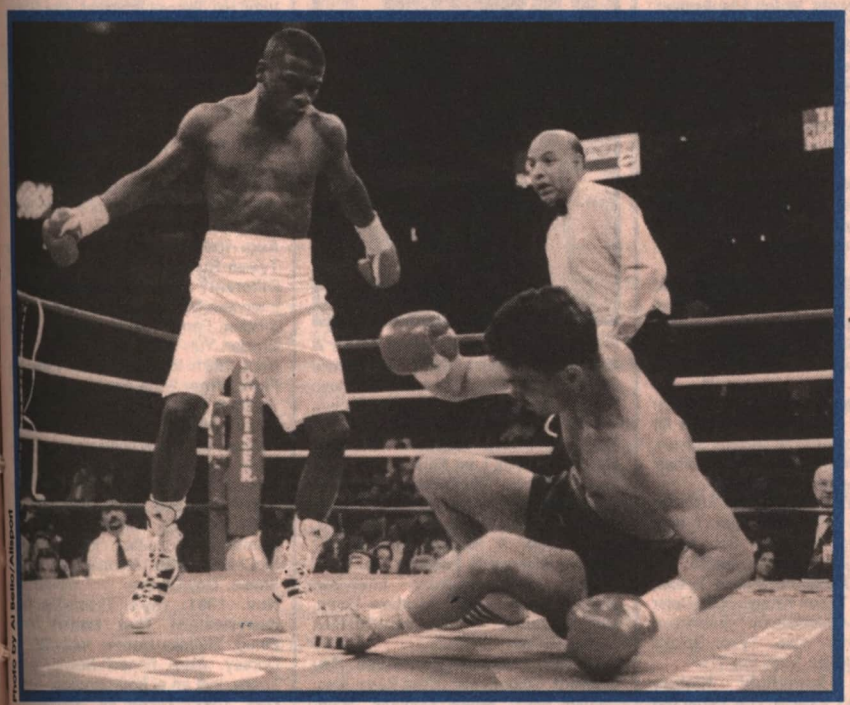


Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

*Olympian Floyd Mayweather Jr. displayed both his skills and his attitude in scoring a first-round knockout of Bobby Geipert in April '97. The 21-year-old phenom has already challenged WBC super feather champ Genaro Hernandez, and may get his wish despite not facing any top contenders.*

# BACK ISSUES OF KO

Back issues of several editions of *KO Magazine*, the acknowledged leader in boxing journalism, are still available in limited quantity. Since its inception in 1980, *KO* has become known for its quality stories and columns and peak-action photographs. Plus, each issue contains a full-color centerfold. Don't delay. Supplies are running out!

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**May 1983: Hector Camacho: "Ray Mancini Will Be An Easy Fight."** Color Pinup: Michael Dokes. Also: Spinks-Qawi, John Tate, Year In Review.

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**Oct. 1983: Is Larry Holmes Finished?** Color Pinup: Greg Page. Interview: Marvis Frazier. Also: Marvin Hagler, Bobby Chacon, Jack Dempsey.

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**Aug. 1985: King Cobra: "Hagler-Hearns Is Done And I'm Better Than Both Of Them!"** Color Pinup: John Mugabi. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Larry Holmes, Roberto Duran, DeWitt-Lee.

**Dec. 1985: Pinklon Thomas: "Larry Holmes Betrayed Boxing."** Color Pinup: Hagler-Mugabi. Also: Mike McCallum, Tyrell Biggs, Camacho-Ramirez.

**Jan. 1986: Macho Mania! Hector Camacho Takes Aim At 10 Tough Targets.** Color Pinup: Jimmy Paul. Interview: Alexis Arguello. Also: Truth Williams, Curry-McCrory.

**July 1986: Tyson, McGuigan, Hagler: The Stars Catch Fire And Boxing Is Hot Again!** Color Pinup: Azumah Nelson. Also: Camacho-Chavez.

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**Feb. 1987: Upset Of The Decade: Has Honeyghan Cut Short The Curry Era?** Color Pinup: Marvin Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Edwin Rosario, Hector Camacho.

**May 1987: Hagler vs. Leonard: Who Will Win And Why.** Color Pinup: Edwin Rosario. Also: Tyson-Bonecrusher, Leonard-Hagler, Bobby Czyz, Greg Haugen.

**Sept. 1987: Bobby Czyz: Finally, His Accomplishments Match His Appeal.** Color Pinup: Sugar Ray. Interview: Lloyd Honeyghan. Also: Mark Breland, Hector Camacho, Weekend Warriors.

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**Nov. 1987: Michael Spinks: The War With Tyson Is Okay With Him.** Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: Frankie Duarte. Also: Matthew Hilton, Hagler-Czyz.

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**Sept. 1989: "I Beat Up Tyson Before, I'll Do It Again," by Carl Williams.** Color Pinup: Michael Nunn. Also: Chavez-Mayweather, Brian Mitchell, Marv Albert.

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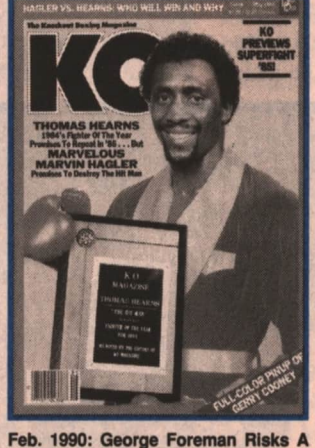


**Feb. 1990: George Foreman Risks A Multimillion-Dollar Shot At Tyson.** Color Pinup: Brian Mitchell. Interview: Riddick Bowe. Also: Simon Brown, Molina-Lopez, East vs. West.

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**June 1991: Exclusive KO Interview: Evander Holyfield.** Color Pinup: Raul Perez. Also: Norris-Leonard, Charles Williams, champs of 1971 vs. 1991, Chavez.

**July 1991: Riddick Bowe: Is He Destined To Be Heavyweight Champ?** Color Pinup: Michael Carbajal. Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Bobby Czyz, Buster Douglas, Mark Breland.

**Aug. 1991: Desert Storm II: Will The Tyson-Ruddock Rematch Be Different?** Color Pinup: Loreto Garza. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Brown-Blocker, Fenech-Nelson preview, Harold Brazier, Yuh-Carbajal.

**Sept. 1991: Remember Me? I Won The Fight! What "The Real Deal" Still Has To Deal With.** Color Pinup: Ray Mercer. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Larry Holmes, southpaw heavyweights, Toney-Nunn, Brown-Taylor.

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**Dec. 1991: Tyson vs. Holyfield-The Experts Analyze The Elements That Will Decide The Fight.** Color Pinup: Joey Gamache. Also: Michael Moorer, Pernell Whitaker, Greg Richardson, Robert Quiroga.

**Jan. 1992: The Tyson-Holyfield Showdown: An Exclusive Forecast By George Foreman.** Color Pinup: Myung Woo Yuh. Also: Fenech-Nelson, TV announcers, boxing's toughest men, Toney-McCallum.

**March 1992: KO Interview Mike Tyson: An In-Depth, Toe-To-Toe Talk With Boxing's Biggest Star.** Color Pinup: Michael Moorer. Also: Thomas Hearns, Tracy Patterson, Larry Holmes, best fighter poll.

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**Nov. 1992: Foreman vs. Holmes: The Fight Evander Holyfield Should Have Prevented.** Color Pinup: Iran Barkley. Interview: Joey Gamache. Also: Hector Camacho, Tracy Patterson, Rudy Zavala.

**Dec. 1992: The Final Four: Ruddock vs. Lewis, Holyfield vs. Bowe.** Color Pinup: Genaro Hernandez. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: Whitaker-Pineda, Bowe-Coetzer, Alex Stewart, Gamache-Lopez.

**Jan. 1993: Holyfield vs. Bowe: Who Will Win and Why.** Color Pinup: Al Cole. Interview: Vinny Pazienza. Also: James Toney, Terrence Alli, Maurice Blocker.

**March 1993: Not Just Another English Muffin: Lennox Lewis Powers His Way Toward The Title.** Color Pinup: Leeonzer Barber. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Reggie Johnson, Lopez-Gamache, USA Network.

**May 1993: Recapping The Future: Julio Cesar Chavez' Road To 100-0.** Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Junior Jones. Also: Buddy McGirt, Riddick Bowe, Raul Marquez.

**Dec. 1993: The KO Feud Rages On: "I Will Torture You!" Says Riddick Bowe To Lennox Lewis.** Color Pinup: Kennedy McKinney. Also: Mississippi boxing, George Foreman, Yori Boy Campas , Carbajal-Kim, Morrison-Moorer.

**Jan. 1994: Outrage At The Alamodome: "Sweet Pea" Shafted!** Color Pinup: Orlando Canizales. Interview: Kennedy McKinney. Also: James Toney, book of lists, M.A. Barrera.

**March 1994: Holyfield-Bowe II: Why It Was Different This Time.** Color Pinup: Felix Trinidad. Also: Morrison-Bentt, Thomas Hearns, Don King, Michael Carbajal, Oscar De La Hoya.

**May 1994: Oscar De La Hoya—He Wants It All And He Wants It Now,** Color Pinup: Anaclet Wamba. Interview: Simon Brown. Also: Tom Johnson, J.C. Chavez, Julio Borboa.

**June 1994: Frankie Randall Makes It Official! J.C. Chavez Is A Beaten Man.** Color Pinup: Jose Luis Bueno. Also: Norris brothers, Felix Trinidad, Holyfield-Moorer preview, heroes to the stars.

**July 1994: The Upset Epidemic! Carbajal's Conqueror: Chiquita Gonzalez.** Color Pinup: Junior Jones. Interview: Rafael Ruelas. Also: Jake Rodriguez, Czyz-Hearns preview, Randall-Chavez II preview.

**Dec. 1994: Boxing Comes Off The Floor ... And Looks Toward A Knockout Future.** Color Pinup: Julio Borboa. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Arturo Gatti, Oliver McCall, MGM Grand.

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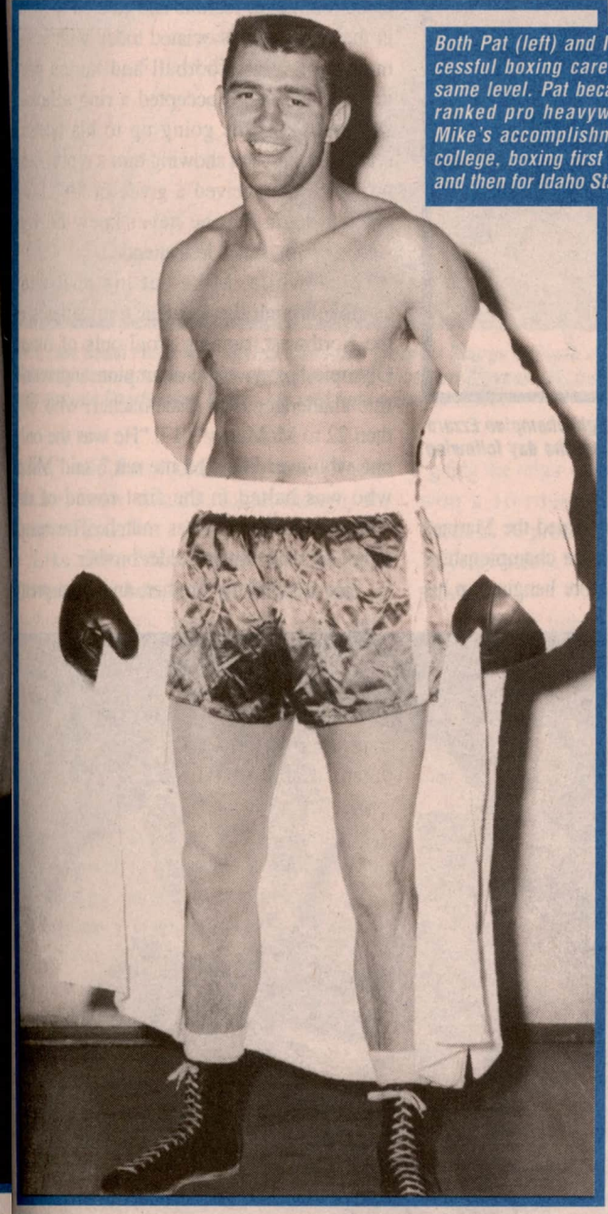
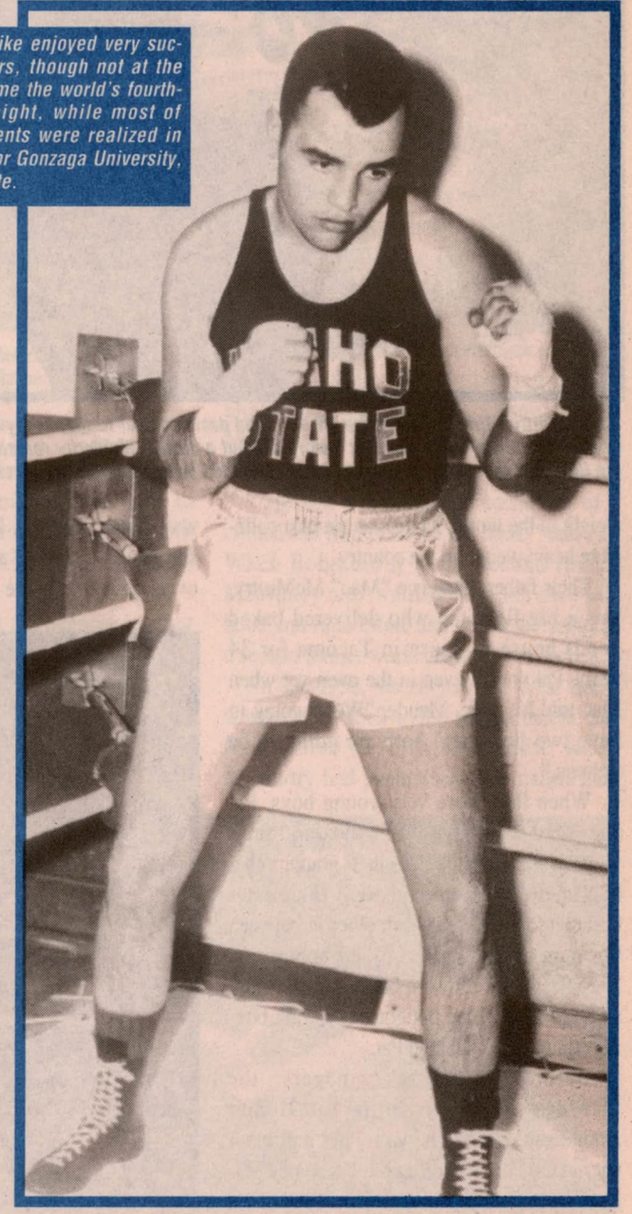
# PAT AND MIKE McMURTRY

*The fighting McMurtry brothers of Tacoma, Washington, got an early start in boxing. Here, six-year-old Pat and five-year-old Mike spar wearing the striped trunks their grandmother made for them.*

## Brothers-In-Arms That Misfortune Couldn't Separate





*Both Pat (left) and Mike enjoyed very successful boxing careers, though not at the same level. Pat became the world's fourth-ranked pro heavyweight, while most of Mike's accomplishments were realized in college, boxing first for Gonzaga University, and then for Idaho State.*

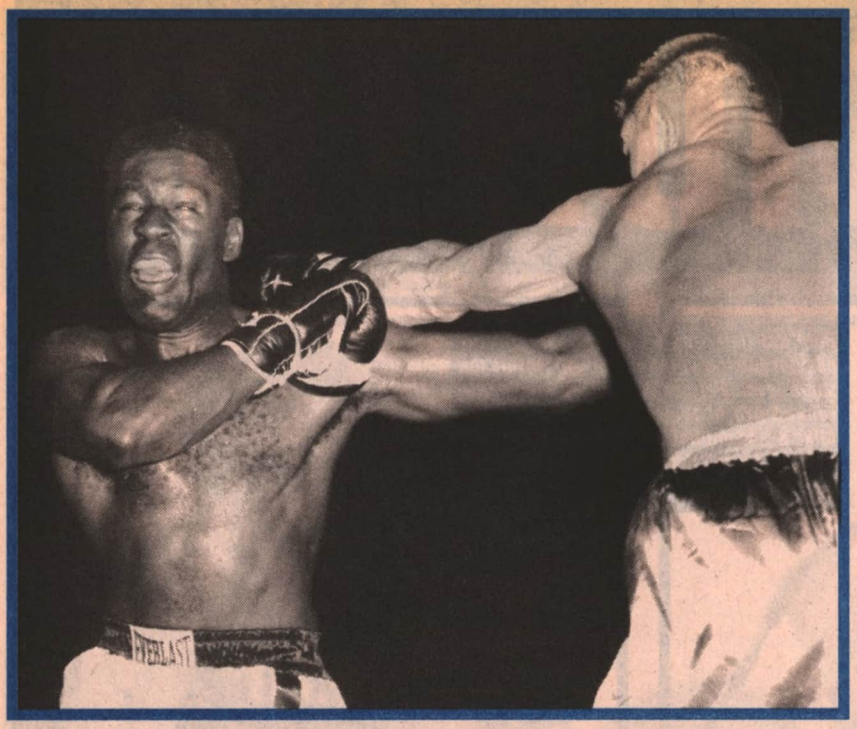
By **Pete Ehrmann**

Did you hear the one about the Irish-American heavyweights named Pat and Mike who have been jabbing each other silly for over 60 years?

"He's always calling me and trying to pull like he's someone else," said Mike McMurtry, 64.

"I called him up once and told him I was with the Associated Press and wanted to do a story about Pat McMurtry," said Pat McMurtry, 66. "He said, 'He's dead.' 'He's dead?' I said. 'He died of AIDS,' he said."

Sixteen months separate them, but nothing else ever has or ever could come between the fighting Irish McMurtry brothers of Tacoma, Washington, whose boxing careers followed very similar paths and ultimately took the same frightening twist in the 1950s. While Pat became the fourth-ranked heavy-



*Pat McMurtry's first big win came via 10-round decision over former heavyweight champion Ezzard Charles in July of 1956, his 21st victory without a defeat. McMurtry remembers the day following the fight just as fondly, as he and Charles attended church together in Tacoma.*

weight in the world, Mike was the best collegiate heavyweight in the country.

Their father, Clarence "Mac" McMurtry, was a big fight fan who delivered baked goods house-to-house in Tacoma for 34 years. Pat wasn't even in the oven yet when Mac told his wife, Maude, "We're going to have two boys, and both are going to be fighters."

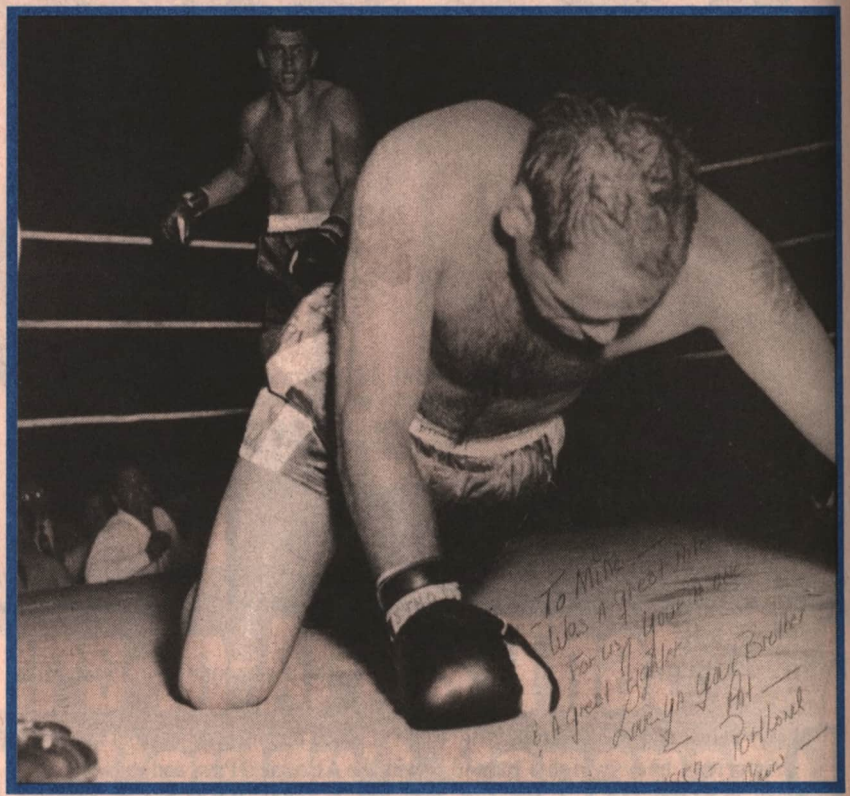
When they were very young boys, Pat and Mike would put on the boxing trunks with the Irish green stripes their grandmother had made for them and fight three one-minute rounds against each other in between bouts on the pro cards in their hometown. "People would throw money into the ring, and that's how Dad bought us our first boxing equipment," recalled Pat.

Before they were teenagers, the McMurtrys were fighting for Homer Amundson, a well-known trainer and manager in the Pacific Northwest. Pat started collecting regional amateur titles in 1949. Two years later, he was in the national championships in Boston, where, despite breaking a hand in the first match, he made it into the 175-pound finals against Beantown native John Boutillier. McMurtry lost a split decision that was booed so raucously that it was 25 minutes before the contestants for the national heavyweight title could get underway. Later that year, Pat joined the Marines and added a slew of service championships overseas and at home before hanging up his singlet with a record of 103-2.

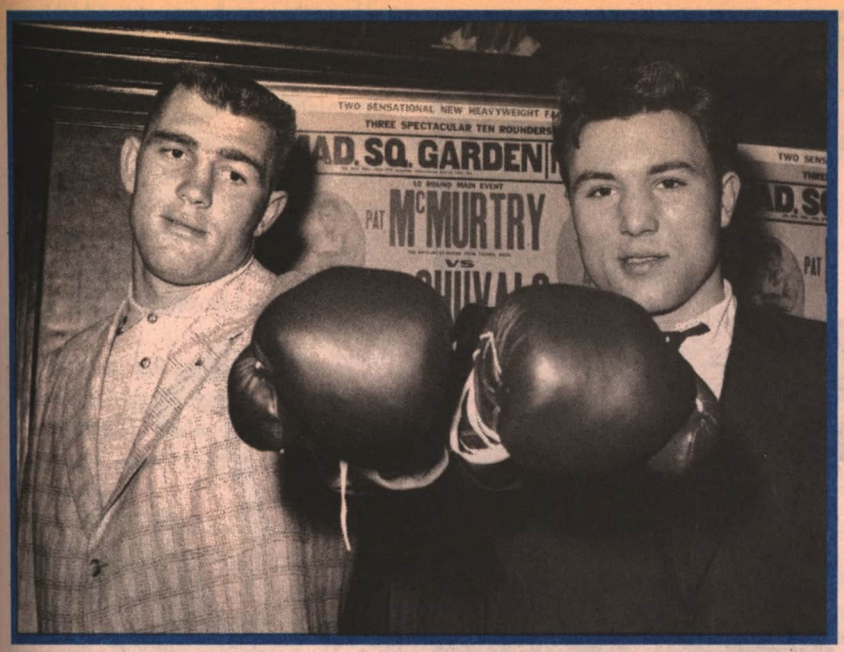
Earlier, Pat had spent a year at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. Boxing was a huge sport on college campuses all over the United States then, with intercollegiate meets regularly outdrawing basketball games. The National Collegiate Athletic Association crowned champions in an annual tournament, and some schools with boxing teams went after recruits and catered to them in the same way associated today with some major collegiate football and hoops programs. Pat, who'd accepted a ring scholarship at 16, recalls going up to his boxing coach one day and showing him a report card on which he received a grade of "A" for a class in logic that he never knew he was signed up for, much less attended.

Meanwhile, Mike cut his own wide swathe through the amateur tournaments in the Northwest, running afoul only of future Olympic heavyweight champion and world title challenger Pete Rademacher, who was then 22 to McMurtry's 17. "He was the only one who ever knocked me out," said Mike, who was halted in the first round of the Tacoma Golden Gloves match. The result didn't set well with his older brother.

"He stopped my brother, and I got pretty




*Former middleweight champion Bobo Olson became another of Pat McMurtry's victims, when a left-right combination knocked him out in the second round. Pat sent this photo of the kayo to his brother Mike, then a U.S. Marine, with a note written in the lower right corner.*




*Pat's East Coast debut was against Canadian prospect George Chuvalo at Madison Square Garden. McMurtry scored a one-sided victory over the unbeaten 21-year-old, but like his other significant wins against Charles and Olson, his next fight ended in defeat.*

upset," said Pat, "and made sure [Rademacher] knew about it. Later, though, we became friends."

Like Pat, Mike went to Gonzaga University to box, and in 1952 he lost to Michigan's Chuck Speiser (later a top light heavyweight contender) in the 178-pound NCAA tournament finals. The next year, Mike became the national collegiate heavyweight champion. After Gonzaga dropped its boxing program, he transferred to Idaho State and was a major force in collegiate boxing through 1956, as a heavyweight and light heavyweight. Then, at Pat's recommendation, he also joined the Marines.

Pat's own leatherneck hitch, which included front-line duty in the Korean War, ended by 1954, and the 6'1½" staff sergeant began a rapid ascent into the pro ranks soon afterward. That year Pat had 12 bouts for pay, and only one of his opponents was still around for the final bell. McMurtry remained undefeated through 1955 (with a draw against tough Bob Albright), and was 20-0-1 (18) when he faced Ezzard Charles on July 13, 1956.

Charles—"The Cincinnati Cobra"—had turned pro 16 years earlier, and won the world heavyweight title in 1949. McMurtry considers him the most underrated of the descendants of John L. Sullivan, and admitted that the ringworn 35-year-old, who'd lost the title to Jersey Joe Walcott in 1951, was "going the other way" in his career when Pat won a 10-round decision from him in Tacoma. "I probably couldn't have done it 10 years before," he said. "I beat a beautiful person."

McMurtry treasures the memory of what happened the next day almost as much as that of their fight itself. It was a Sunday, and he got a call from the man with whom he had swapped punches the night before. The former champion of the world wondered if McMurtry knew where he might attend church services in Tacoma. "I picked him up and went to church with him," said Pat.

Fourteen-thousand fans turned out for his fight a month later with then-heavyweight contender and future light heavyweight champion Willie Pastrano in McMurtry's hometown. They went 10 rounds, and after the local hero was declared the loser for the first time in his pro career by the vote of two of the three officials, McMurtry said an incredulous Angelo Dundee, Pastrano's trainer, said to him, "They don't like you here? We'd have been happy to get a draw."

Forty-two years later, the memory still gouges McMurtry. "Piss on this town," he said. "You can print that."

Carl "Bobo" Olson had reigned as middleweight champion from 1953 to '55, until Sugar Ray Robinson whacked him out. After successfully launching a comeback as a light heavyweight in 1957 by beating former champion Joey Maxim, Olson fought McMurtry in Portland, Oregon, on August 17.

"He had a tendency to come out of a crouch and leap in with a left hook," said Pat. When Bobo did it in the second round, McMurtry was waiting with his own left hook and right cross, and added the scalp of a second former world champion to his belt.

In late-1958, the 26-year-old West Coast wonder, then 29-2-1 (the second defeat was by decision to Willi Besmanoff, when McMurtry had pneumonia) was called East

*Chuvalo's nose was badly bloodied in the fight, as he's seen missing with a left in the eighth round. McMurtry's precise left jab was the key to a 10-round decision victory.*

*Pat and his wife show off their 10-month-old daughter, Shannon, to Mike and his fiancee, as well as their parents. The patriarch of the family, Clarence "Mac" McMurtry, managed his fighting sons.*

to make his debut in Madison Square Garden. His opponent in the October 17 bout had only 18 pro bouts, but some were already comparing the 21-year-old Canadian heavyweight champion to undefeated former world titlist Rocky Marciano.

"I beat the hell out of George Chuvalo," recalled McMurtry. Weighing 188½ pounds to the Canadian's 207½, McMurtry pounded Chuvalo's eyes closed in winning the decision in a bout that put Chuvalo into retirement for a year.

"There were no knockdowns," reported Dean McGowen of *The New York Times*, "but there was plenty of blood, and all of it was Chuvalo's. The crimson ribbon started to flow in a wide band from Chuvalo's nose in the second round. It was the cutting left jab of McMurtry that did the damage. And in every succeeding round McMurtry quickly whacked Chuvalo's nose to start the blood stream again. McMurtry's lightning jab also cut Chuvalo on his left eyebrow. That jab made Chuvalo's nose seem to be spreading all over his face."

"I think I did a good job on George," McMurtry said recently, noting that the indestructible Canadian, who went on to earn top contender status in the 1960s, meeting Muhammad Ali, Floyd Patterson, George Foreman, and Joe Frazier, was inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame last year.

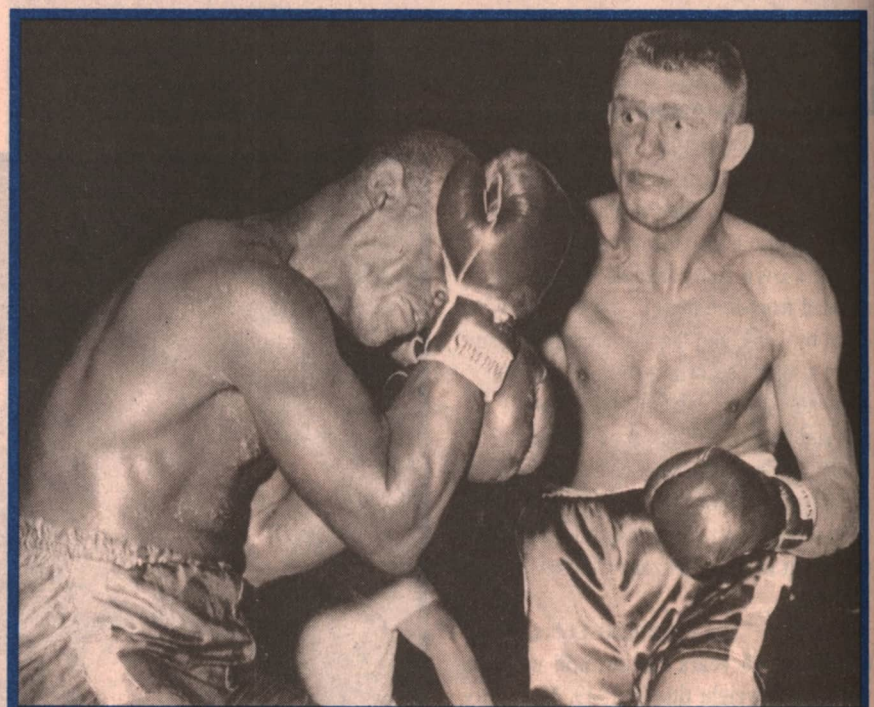
Patterson was the champion in the late-1950s, but McMurtry never got to fight him. "I punched harder and faster than Floyd," he said. "I think I'd have given him a hell of a good fight. It would have been a coin-flip as to who would've won."

He might have found out had McMurtry accepted an offer he received after he knocked out Olson. Syndicated sports columnist Harry Grayson offered Mac McMurtry, who managed his son, $50,000 for Pat's contract. Grayson, said Pat, wanted him to fight out of the Petronelli stable in Boston, where Pat's Irish heritage and what he accomplished there in the 1951 national tournament would have made him a natural attraction.

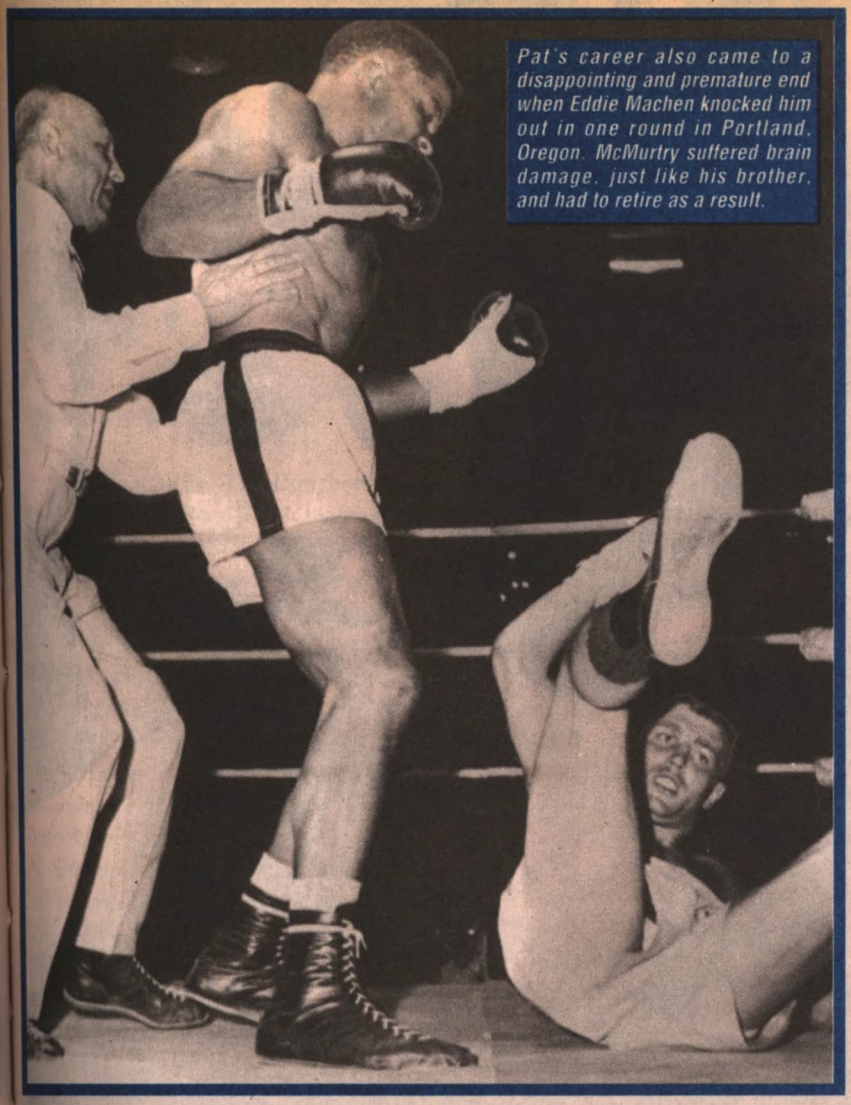
"They guaranteed me that within four or five fights I would fight for the heavyweight championship of the world," said McMurtry. "I should've gone, but I loved my dad and I stayed with him."

In his next Garden match after the Chuvalo win, "I looked like a pissant riding an elephant," said Pat. The elephant was huge Nino Valdes, a top contender from Cuba. The fight was called in the first round after the referee said McMurtry went down three times. Pat acknowledges the first knockdown, says the second one was actually a push, and is still trying to figure out how they arrived at number three.

The Year 1959 was a momentous one in the McMurtry brothers' boxing careers and their lives. Mike hadn't done much boxing in the Marines, but when he got out that year, the 214-7 amateur sensation decided to keep



*For one night, the McMurtrys were both professionals, as Mike won his pro debut against Ken Haas on the undercard of Pat's win over Earl Atley (above). Unfortunately, Mike missed out on the opportunity to enjoy the same success in the pros as his brother because of a blood clot that developed on his brain after the fight against Haas.*



*Pat's career also came to a disappointing and premature end when Eddie Machen knocked him out in one round in Portland, Oregon. McMurtry suffered brain damage, just like his brother, and had to retire as a result.*

following in his older brother's footsteps. "I always wanted to fight pro," he said. "I don't think I could have been champion, but I could have been a contender and made myself some money."

He took his first step in that direction on July 21, fighting Ken Haas in a six-rounder on the undercard of Pat's main event against Earl Atley. "[Mike] won hands down," recalled Pat. "It was a hell of a boxing exhibition." Pat knocked Atley out in their bout, and afterward the McMurtrys and their father celebrated in their usual fashion with a drink of Irish whiskey. But several days later, Mike began getting severe headaches, and then started vomiting up everything he ate. A neurologist tapped his spine and found blood.

"They operated on me right away," he said. "I had a blood clot on my brain and they siphoned it off. I'm lucky to be alive. It was quite a while before I felt better. Of course, boxing was all over."

Mike was well enough to be with Pat in Portland on October 27, when the older brother faced top contender Eddie Machen. Pat had won three fights since the loss to Valdes, and although Machen had lost only once in 32 bouts (with one draw), Pat had seen him decision Bob Baker and draw with Zora Folley, and surmised that "if the going got tough, [Machen] clammed up and started to box."

"This S.O.B. has got dog in him," he told Mike as he prepared to enter the ring against Machen.

"I had a good left hand," Pat recalled, "and I figured if it went past a round-and-a-half, I had this guy in my pocket."

It didn't, and it took them 16 minutes to revive Irish Pat after Machen knocked him out in the first round. "Did we win?" he asked his brother. Answered Mike: "He's got dog in him, like you said. But it's pit bull!"

What happened later wasn't so funny. After walking around in a daze for two days, Pat had five electro-encephalograms (brain wave tests) and failed them all. "I ended up with brain damage on the left side," he said. "That's why I walk a little bit to the right. If I was walking with you in a mall, and you're on the right side and the store windows are on your side, within less than 100 feet I'd walk you into a store."

While their brain injuries put both McMurtrys out of the sport that had been their life, neither one even waits to be asked before emphatically declaring he'd do it all over again.

"We had our day and it was fun," said Pat, who was a top referee for several years after he stopped boxing, and was recently inducted into the Washington Athletic Club's Hall of Fame. "I'd give my right arm to start again. It's no fun getting old."

Echoes Mike: "I'd do the same damned thing. I enjoyed what I did."

The McMurtrys live in mobile homes about seven miles from one another, Pat in Tacoma, Mike in Puyallup. They call each other and visit often, and then the needles fly like those left jabs in Chuvalo's squash.

Pat: "He could fight. He couldn't knock a whore off a pisspot, but he could box your ears off."

Mike: "My brother had the best jab I ever saw. I still can't breathe through my nose thanks to him."

Pat: "We have our disagreements at times. I tell him, 'With your punch, I could have you hit me all day long and I wouldn't even feel 'em. I'd hit you with one left hook and it's *Goodnight, Irene*!'"

That's an argument it doesn't pay a third party to take a hand in, as one found out on an occasion recalled by Mike when he and Pat were kids.

"We used to fight all the time," he said. "Once, my brother and I got in a fight and were hitting each other right in the face, and this guy tried to break it up and we both jumped *him*. He said, 'You guys are nuttier than fruitcakes!' and walked away."

The poor guy missed the point completely, of course.

"We're two close brothers," said Pat.

"He's the best friend I got," said Mike. ■

***Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to this magazine.***

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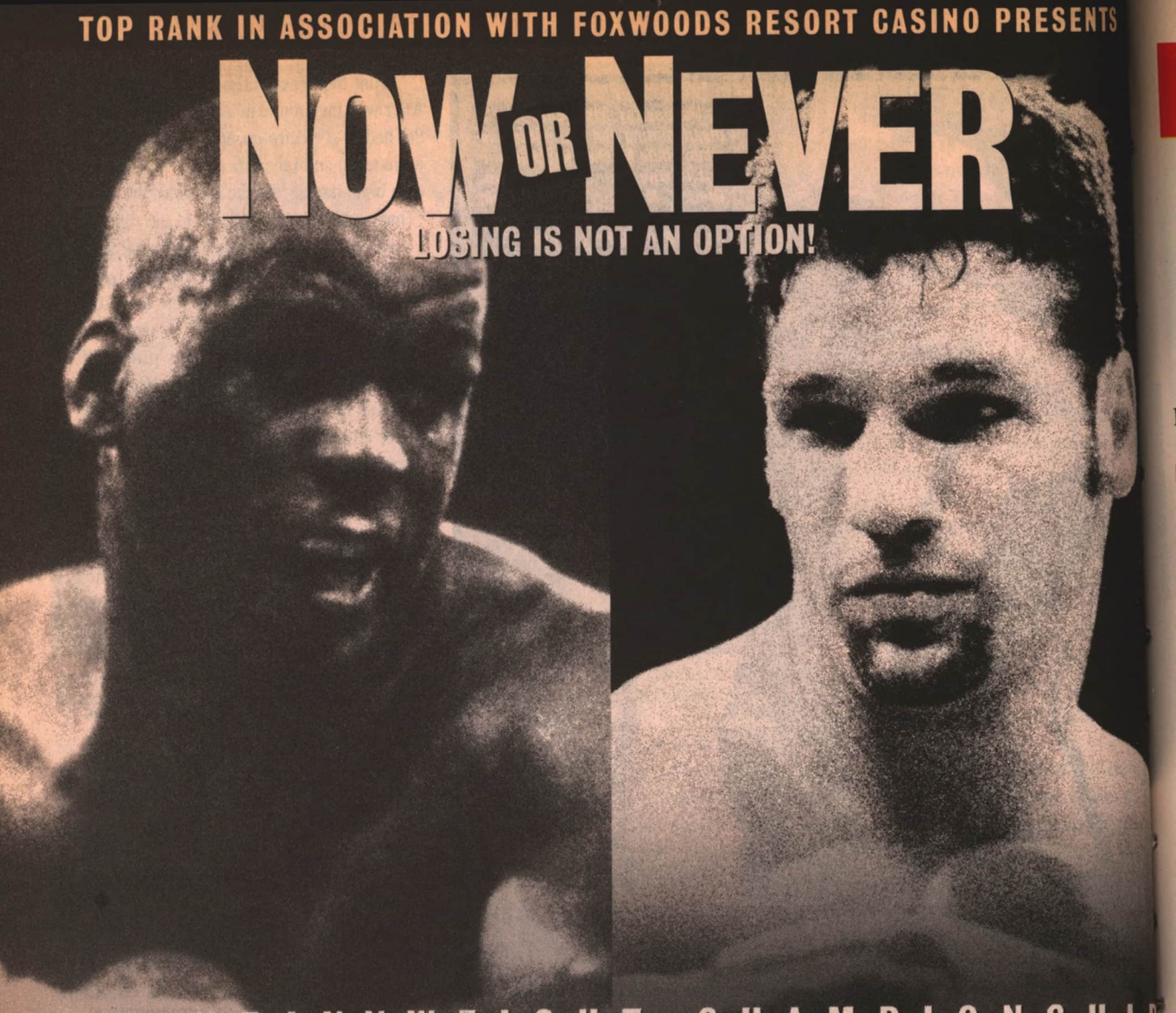

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HEAVYWEIGHT CONTENDER

# CHRIS BYRD

## Out Of The Dungeon And Ready To Fly

**By Joe Santoliquito**

They called it "The Dungeon." Joe Byrd's basement, with its gray cinder block walls and thin ventilation, resembled a torture chamber. A makeshift ring stood in one corner, squared off by three walls linked by a string that served as a rope, and in the middle stood a punching bag. The ring was eight feet by eight feet, if that. The tiny room, which had one window that barely opened, was a boxing incubator for the Byrd children, Tracy, Patrick, and Chris.

Boxing has always been a way of life for heavyweight contender Chris Byrd and his family, its roots entrenched in The Dungeon. Joe, the patriarch of the boxing family, did not care about the drab decor. His priority was to provide an opportunity for his kids and turn out successful boxers. Every time Chris Byrd climbs into the ring, the stamp of the Byrd family is in his corner, as he's joined by his father, mother, and brother Patrick. Chris has been approached about changing his corner, but that won't happen. The home recipe has been too successful: Joe is his trainer, Rose is his vocal cutmom. That's the way it's always been. Joe was also Chris' Olympic coach in 1992, when he won a silver medal as a 165-pound middleweight.

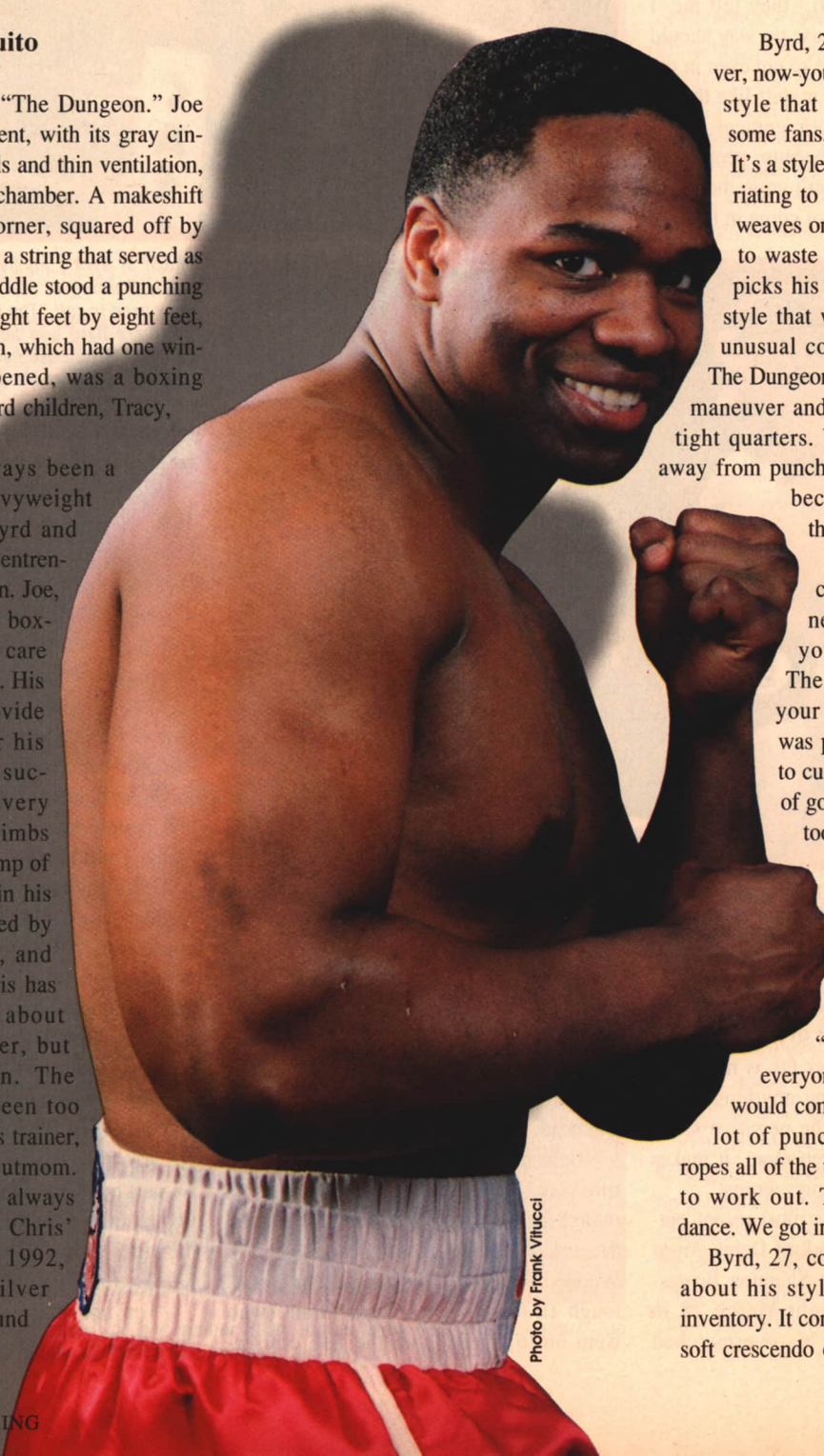


Photo by Frank Vitucci

Byrd, 24-0 (14), has a quicksilver, now-you-see-me, now-you-don't style that can be entertaining to some fans, while boring to others. It's a style that usually proves infuriating to opponents. He bobs and weaves on the ropes, forcing them to waste their punches, while he picks his spots and scores. It's a style that was created through the unusual condition to be found in The Dungeon, where Chris learned to maneuver and parry punches in very tight quarters. With no room to move away from punches in the small ring, he became adept at avoiding them in other ways.

Byrd's punching accuracy was also born of necessity. If you missed your sparring partner in The Dungeon, you plowed your fist into a wall, which was padded by stapled carpet to cushion errant blows. A lot of good it did Chris, who was too tall for the carpet, and he quickly discovered how much it hurt to miss.

"I really believe a lot of my style came from there," he said. "We sparred against everyone. A lot of bigger guys would come at me. I had to slip a lot of punches, and fight off the ropes all of the time. It was a great place to work out. There was no room to dance. We got in great shape there."

Byrd, 27, constantly hears criticism about his style and keeps a mental inventory. It comes at him in whispers, a soft crescendo of "can'ts, doesn'ts, and

won'ts." Translation: Can't punch, doesn't have enough size, won't ever be world heavyweight champion. He hears it all and flashes an engaging smile.

"Well, everyone has a right to their opinion," Chris said nonchalantly. "I've heard this all before. I've heard the good and the bad, but I can't dwell on the bad, because I'm out to prove people wrong every single time I'm in the ring.

"The flip side is a lot of people really like my style. They really dig it. 'You're the best thing since Ali,' they tell me. I shouldn't say that, because no way should I be compared to Ali; we're not even in the same sentence. But I hear stuff like that. It gives me a bit of encouragement. But I won't change my style because people say I can't punch. And I won't go in there and start banging, and I'm not going in there to do other things people want me to do. I'll never do that. I've heard so much negative publicity about myself as far as my style, it's kind of weird seeing anything good. I've always expected the negative stuff, that makes me drive even more. It makes me want to prove these guys wrong."

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

***Much of Byrd's elusive style stems from his early training in his father's basement gym they used to call "The Dungeon." The tiny area is where Byrd was forced to adopt defensive tactics, as he does here in a sixth-round kayo of Derek Amos on March 28 in Atlantic City.***

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

***Byrd is growing frustrated fighting lackluster competition such as Amos. He says the heavyweight class is clogged with champions fighting on "the bum trail," afraid to face a skilled, tricky lefthander like him. He's hoping for a title shot by mid-1999.***

So far, he has. In his most recent outing, Byrd made easy work of Derek Amos on the undercard of the Shannon Briggs-Lennox Lewis title fight March 28 in Atlantic City, beating his overmatched opponent by sixth-round kayo. Chris was his typical self, moving and swaying away from his opponent's punches, while delivering his own unerring shots to the body and head.

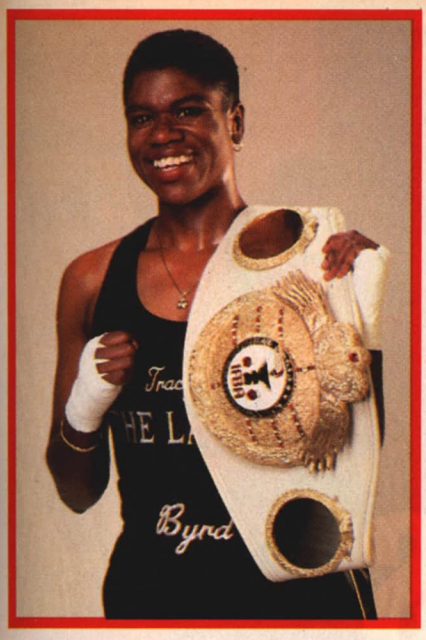
Right now, Byrd finds his career at an impasse. He wants better opponents, though he does own victories over some decent heavyweights, including Jeff Wooden (who recently gave David Tua a tough 10-round fight), Uriah Grant (who went on to briefly hold the IBF cruiserweight title), and Jimmy Thunder (a popular puncher with a suspect chin).

Byrd's timetable for a title shot is mid-1999. He says boxing is filled with champions fighting "on the bum trail." He feels frustrated because the heavyweight class is clogged with fighters who do not want to risk their current status against someone like him, a crafty lefthander.

"I'm one of the young heavyweights who is willing to fight anyone," said Byrd. "I don't have to wait three or four more fights to fight for a title. I'm ready today, and people know that; people know I'm ready. I used to be impatient when I was 15-0, I wanted to fight for the title then. I always thought whoever had the title, I could beat them. Now, I'm trying to be very patient and trying to keep it in God's hands. You have to have faith in the Lord. That's where I lay my faith, in God's hands, and just wait."

Byrd mentioned WBC champ Lewis and WBA/IBF titlist Evander Holyfield as possible future opponents, but, realistically, he knows the chance of meeting those two in the near future is remote at best, and mentions more practical prospects like Ray Mercer or Michael Moorer.

"I'm not really dying to fight anyone specifically," Byrd said. "Right now, it's



*Two of Byrd's sisters are professional athletes. Tracy is the IFBA lightweight champion, while Laurie (right) plays basketball for the San Jose Lasers.*

Photo by Frank Vitucci

*Chris, shown here with his father Joe and mother Rose, makes every fight a family affair. Joe works the corner as chief trainer, and Rose as his cutmom and very vocal supporter.*

too hard to get fights and too hard getting the number-one mandatory spot with the type of opponents I'm fighting now. Hopefully, by mid-1999, everything will break open."

If he stayed a middleweight, Chris stated without hesitation, he would be a world champion today. The 6'2", 217-pound Byrd is the same height as he was in 1988 when he was fighting at 139 pounds, but he got tired of cutting weight all the time. So he re-evaluated his plans of becoming a champion at a lower weight and decided to think big, *real* big, as in the heavyweight class.

In a lot of ways it was easier. He could eat what he wanted, and for the first time in his career, he rebelled against an old boxing tenet and started a weight training program, bulking up to over 200 pounds. He still trains with weights, using more repetitions to build his endurance after he worked his way up to a maximum bench press of 350 pounds. His biggest concern is getting too bulky and losing his quickness.

Until he was 17, Byrd didn't really know what he wanted to do. He was a lanky, 140-pound kid at an athletic powerhouse high school, Flint Northwestern, which produced such athletes as Glen Rice, Andre Rison, and Trent Tucker. Byrd never tried out for any sports there. Instead, he boxed so he could travel to tournaments with his older brothers and his father. He'd collect a trophy here and there, but boxing was a way for Byrd to bond with the rest of his family. But Byrd really didn't want to box, and was actually more interested in the trophies and medals. There is, however, one thing Byrd stresses:

"My father never pushed us in that direction, to boxing," he said. "He would just say, 'You want to box? You're here, so you might as well try it.' All the kids tried it since my dad had a gym and was training boxers. I just wanted to win medals and go on trips. I guess people thought of us as a bunch of boxing nuts."

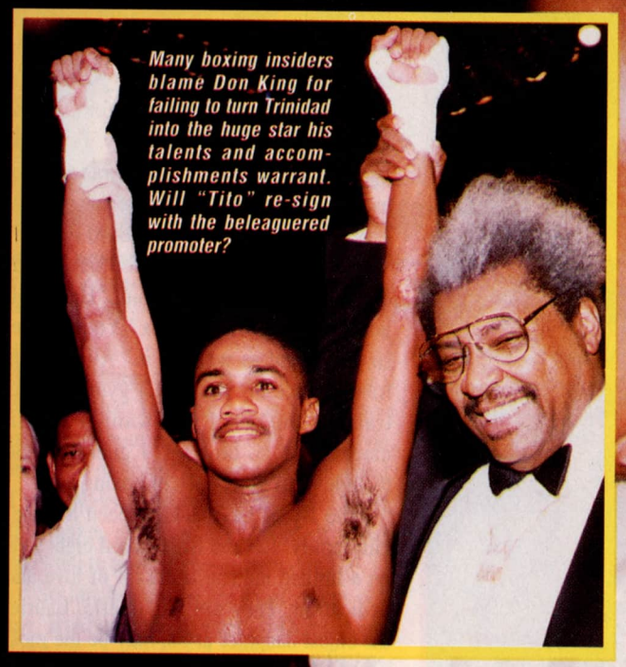
The Byrds have always been a close-knit family. Joe and Rose raised eight kids on a limited income and a lot of love and dedication. They are all athletic. Laurie, the eldest daughter at 38, may be the most gifted. A member of the San Jose Lasers, she's the oldest player in the women's

*(Continued on page 57)*

## A PAWN IN KING'S COURT:

# IS FELIX TRINIDAD WASTING HIS PRIME?

*After 12 successful title defenses, Trinidad's career seems to be stuck in neutral. The multitalented Puerto Rican is still waiting for the superfight that will make him rich and famous.*



*Many boxing insiders blame Don King for failing to turn Trinidad into the huge star his talents and accomplishments warrant. Will "Tito" re-sign with the beleaguered promoter?*

Photos by Jay Lash

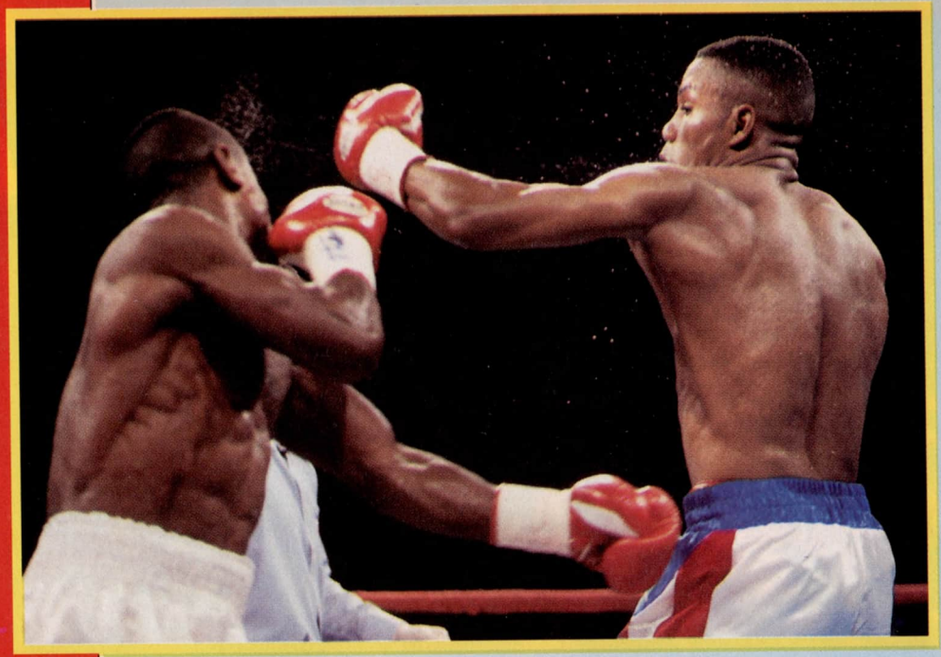


Photo by Tom Casino

*South African challenger Mahenge Zulu samples Trinidad's feared left hook en route to a fourth-round kayo defeat. Outside of his native Puerto Rico, few people were interested in the mismatch.*

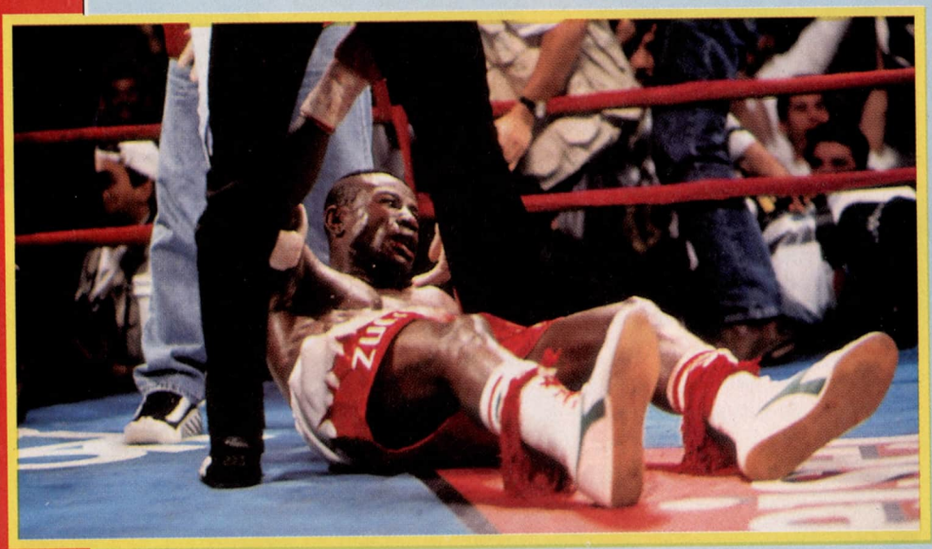


Photo by Tom Casino

*Would the same thing happen to Oscar De La Hoya that happened to Zulu? Millions of boxing fans around the world would love to see that superfight and find out.*

**By Ron Borges**

Don Chargin knows how good a fighter IBF welterweight champion Felix Trinidad is. He also has first-hand knowledge of just how far Trinidad is from where he should be. The longtime West Coast fight promoter recently was reminded of both facts after watching Trinidad easily destroy another in a growing list of nondescript opponents with a fourth-round knockout of Mahenge Zulu on April 3 in Puerto Rico. A day later, Chargin's pool man came to his house in the Los Angeles suburbs, and Chargin asked him what he'd thought of Trinidad.

"Like a lot of guys, my pool man is a fight fan," Chargin recalled. "But I had to explain to him who Felix Trinidad was. Outside of real boxing people and his fans back in Puerto Rico, nobody knows who he is. It's a shame because he's a terrific fighter who seems to have everything. He's quick. He punches good. He's been

*(Continued on page 57)*

# LENNOX LEWIS:

# NO HOLYFIELD, NO GLORY

*Swinging for the fences: Although he mixed his punches up better than in the past, Lewis' deadly right hand was still his biggest weapon against Shannon Briggs.*

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

**By Bernard Fernandez**

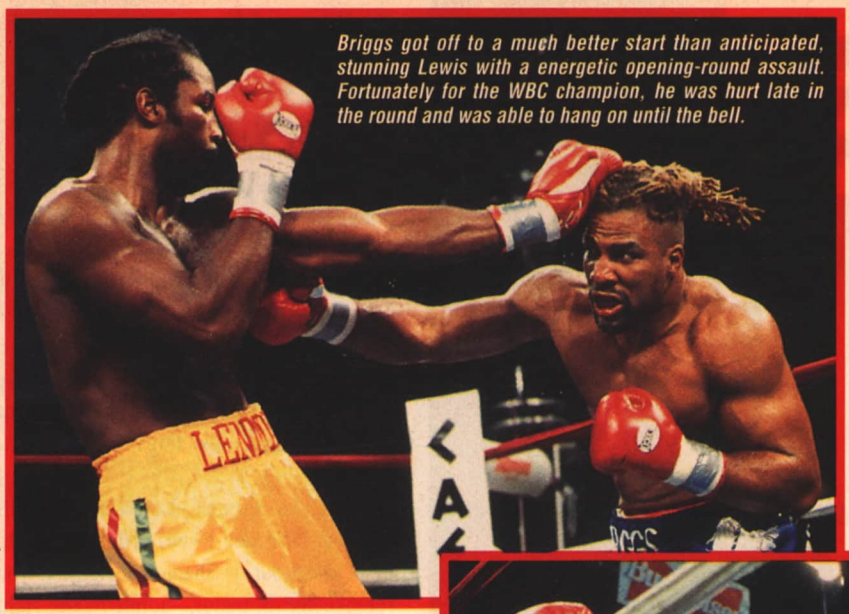
Wasn't it Yogi Berra who once said that "90 percent of baseball is half-mental"?

The evolving career of Lennox Lewis, potential masterpiece but still-unfinished product, remains a case of playing the percentages. To understand who the WBC heavyweight champion is, where he came from (and, no, we don't mean London), and where he is headed, you need to have a knack for fractions and figuring out complex equations. Paging *Good Will Hunting*.

Take, for instance, Lewis' more-exciting-than-it-needed-to-be, fifth-round technical knockout of Shannon Briggs. If you remove the X factor—admit it, the fight was more fun than an HBO audience or 9,173 on-site spectators in Atlantic City Convention Hall had any right to expect—and coldly analyze the numbers, what is the conclusion? That Lewis took a step forward in his bid to become, as his trainer, Emanuel Steward, has said he can, the finest, most complete heavyweight ever to grace his sport? Or did his inability to quickly whack out Briggs, a 12-1 underdog best known for a loss to Darroll Wilson and that notorious gift decision over ancient George Foreman, represent more of a step backward?

Regardless of which theorem an individual might hold to be more valid, it is becoming abundantly clear with each Lewis performance that the only person who can provide the definitive answer is Prof. Evander Holyfield, who holds a Ph.D. in pugilistia. Lewis has passed basic arithmetic with flying colors, and it's time to see how he fares at rocket science against the man who twice took Mike Tyson to school and flunked him. The part that tripped Tyson up in his second session was a real stumper, too: If you remove 20 percent of your opponent's ear through 25 percent of a scheduled 12-round bout, and attempt to remove 20 percent of the other ear in more or less the same time frame, what chance do you have of being allowed to finish without the intervention of an appalled referee who also happens to be a circuit-court judge? (Correct answer: zero.)

Now, if only Holyfield chooses to enroll him in his class, instead of dunces



*Briggs got off to a much better start than anticipated, stunning Lewis with a energetic opening-round assault. Fortunately for the WBC champion, he was hurt late in the round and was able to hang on until the bell.*

Photo by Will Hart/HBO

Photo by Will Hart/HBO

*Briggs was knocked down three times, but the fight was stopped in the fifth after he fell to the floor following a wild miss. By that time, the courageous challenger was nearly exhausted and on the wrong end of a nasty pounding.*

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

*WBA/IBF champion Evander Holyfield spent more time talking about Lewis at the press conference to announce his fight with Henry Akinwande than he did talking about his next opponent.*

like Henry Akinwande and, *ugh,* Vaughn Bean ...

The continuing failure to put Lewis and Holyfield together, in the sort of final-test unification bout that the heavyweight division so desperately needs, is like trying to do addition with only one number. Not only does it not provide an answer to a question that intrigues and perplexes all of boxing, but it ultimately diminishes both fighters and leaves fans wondering whose claim to number one has the most merit.

Know this about Lewis: The big, strong guy inherited by Steward following his shocking, second-round TKO by Oliver McCall in 1994, the guy who pawed with his left jab and telegraphed his signature punch, that big, booming overhand right, was an unformed lump of clay who hardly could be termed a work of art. Steward said at the time that Double L was "maybe 30 percent" of all that he would one day become, which merely was the sum of the best parts of Muhammad Ali, Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano, and maybe Conan the Barbarian.

Following a scare from the rugged Ray Mercer in 1996, Steward assessed his prize pupil's development and figured he had attained 70 percent of full efficiency. "He stood in with a very tough guy and fought back," Steward noted, perhaps conveniently overlooking the fact that many observers in Madison Square Garden that night went away with the impression that the wrong man had been awarded the decision. Nonetheless, Steward said his guy was ready to tackle even more challenging courses.

Lewis has crammed like crazy since that time, resulting in strange disqualification victories over McCall (who threw few punches, but cried a lot) and Akinwande (who obviously was going for the unofficial world records for most and longest clinches), and a first-round blowout of

*(Continued on page 58)*

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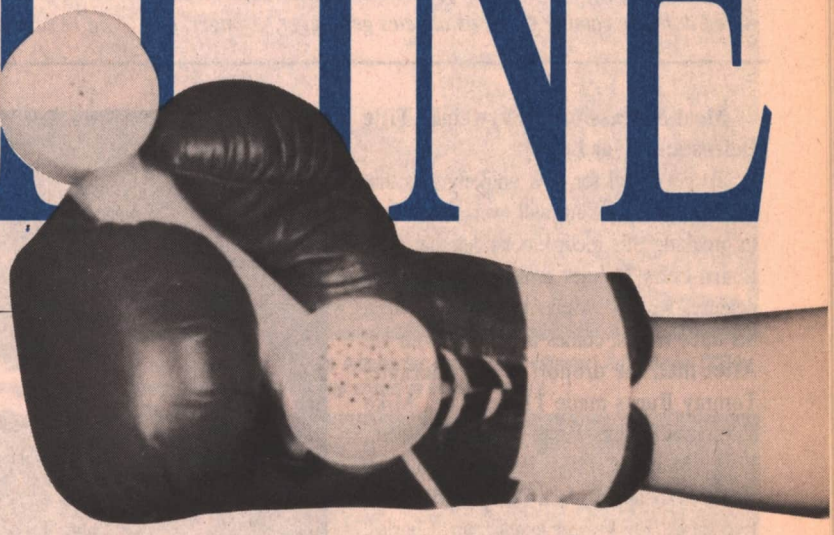

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# THE 10 BOXING RECORDS THAT WILL NEVER BE BROKEN

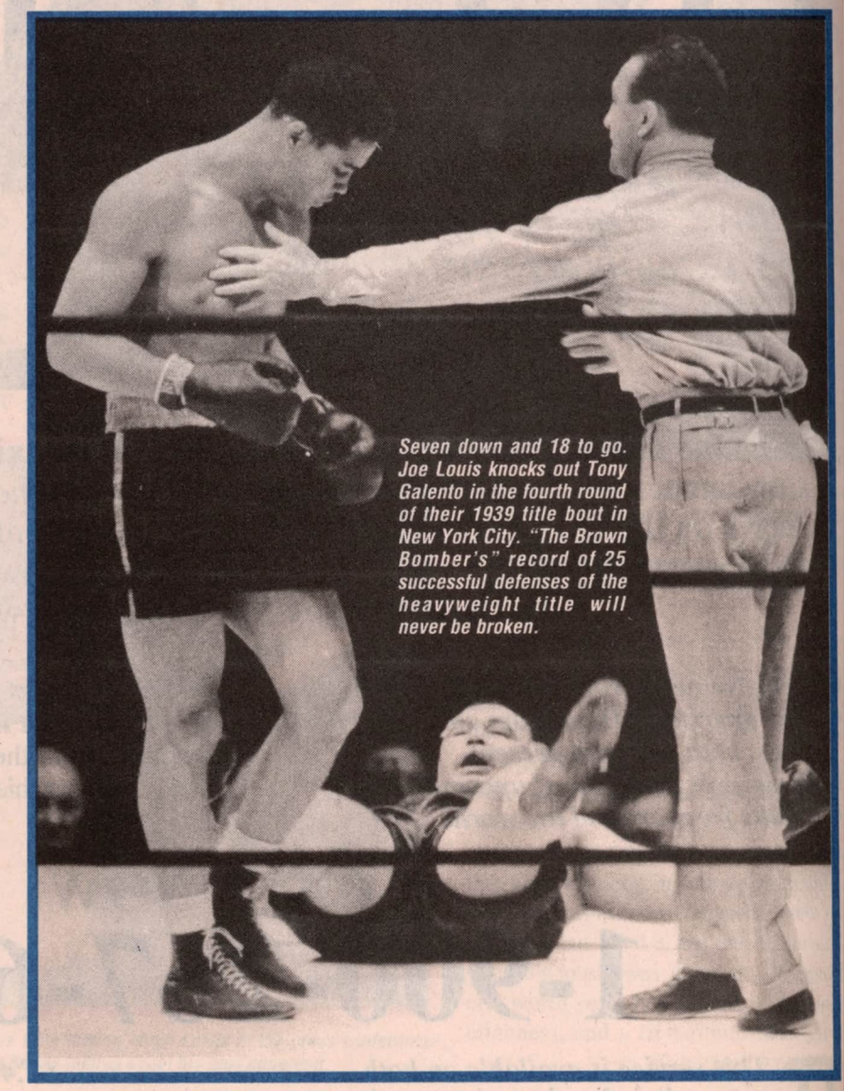
**By William Dettloff**

*Records, like rules, are made to be broken. It is a symptom of the human condition that as the bar is raised, athletes find ways to jump higher, run faster, or go farther. There was a time when the thought of someone running a mile in under four minutes, for example, seemed ludicrous. Today, it's commonplace. For decades, baseball fans thought Babe Ruth's record of 714 career homers would last forever. Then Hank Aaron shattered it. In the coming years, as athletes get bigger, stronger, and faster, and as sports and training techniques evolve, change, and advance, many records will be surpassed, some in boxing. James J. Jeffries' 55-second annihilation of challenger Jack Finnegan in 1900, which has ranked for nearly 100 years as the shortest heavyweight title fight in history, will almost certainly be eclipsed; it's inevitable. There are other fight game records, though, that are a safe bet to endure forever. Here are 10 records we're sure will be intact for as long as the game exists.*

**Most Successful Heavyweight Title Defenses: 25 (Joe Louis)**

To get a feel for how unlikely it is that any heavyweight king will ever come close to breaking this record, consider that after Louis, Larry Holmes ranks second in title defenses with 20. Muhammad Ali, between his three reigns, comes in at third with 19. After that, the dropoff is considerable. Tommy Burns made 11 defenses, Mike Tyson made nine, James J. Jeffries, seven; Rocky Marciano, Floyd Patterson, and Jack Johnson, six apiece; Jack Dempsey defended five times, Joe Frazier and Ezzard Charles, four. Sonny Liston managed just one defense, George Foreman, between old version and new, a total of three. If none of these legends could get close to Louis' record, and only three into double digits, what are the chances that someone will down the road? The current champions, Evander Holyfield and Lennox Lewis, had five and six defenses, respectively, at press time.

Also, consider that except for the years 1943 through '45, during which he was in the Army, Louis had an exceptionally busy schedule for a heavyweight champion, especially by today's standards. He defended the belt four times each in '39 and '40, and seven times in '41. After returning officially to the ring in '46 at the age of 32, he slowed down, making just two defenses that year, one in '47, and one more in '48 before announcing his short-lived retirement. "The Brown Bomber" can rest easy. There are few records in all of sports as safe as this one.



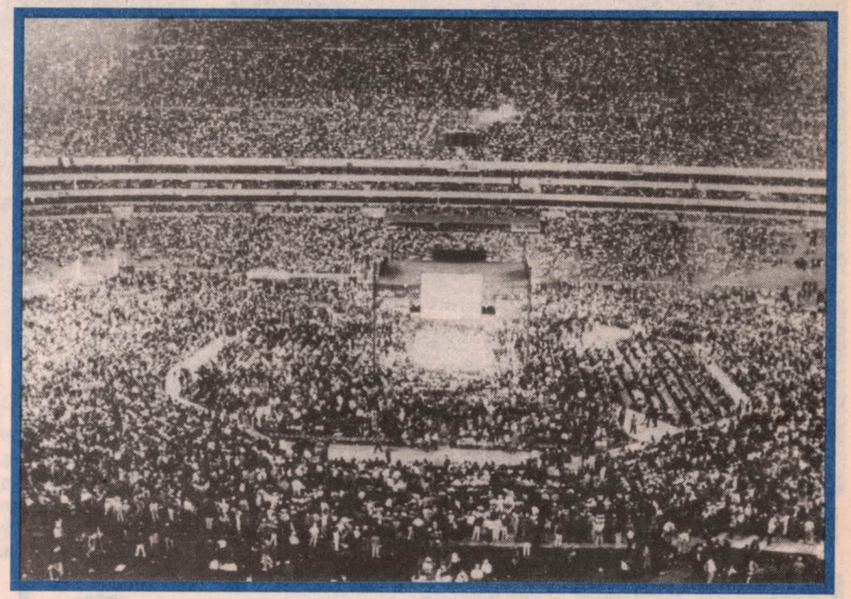
*Seven down and 18 to go. Joe Louis knocks out Tony Galento in the fourth round of their 1939 title bout in New York City. "The Brown Bomber's" record of 25 successful defenses of the heavyweight title will never be broken.*

**Largest Paid Attendance: 136,274 (Julio Cesar Chavez KO 5 Greg Haugen)**

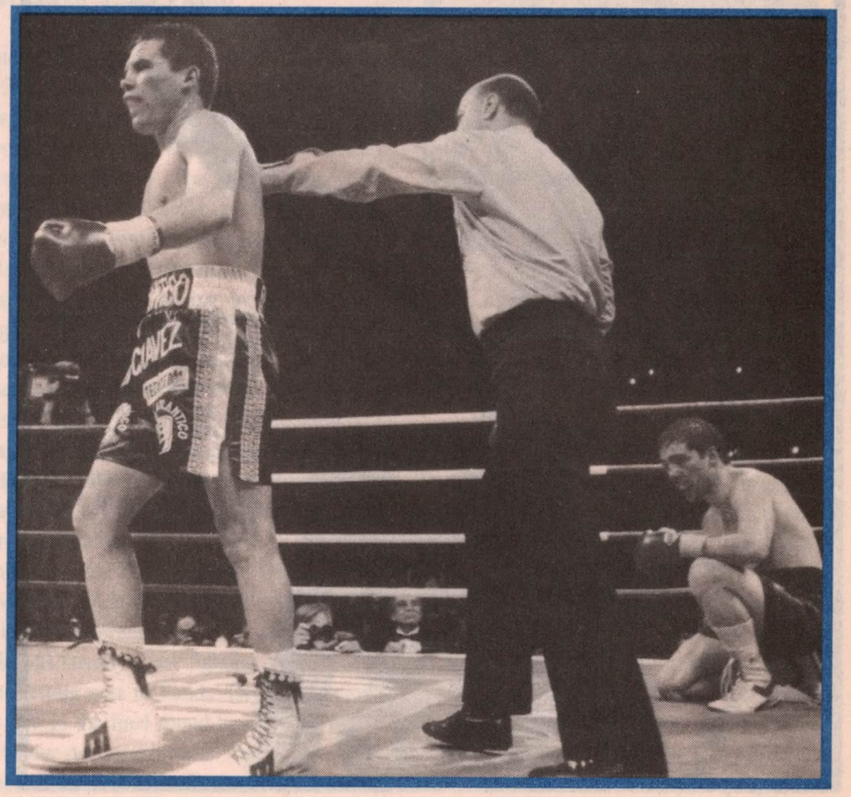
One has to go back a long way—72 years to be exact—to find a paid crowd that comes close to that for the Julio Cesar Chavez-Greg Haugen match in 1993. In 1926, Jack Dempsey's title-losing bout with Gene Tunney drew 120,757 to the Sesquicentennial Stadium in Philadelphia. The rematch two years later drew nearly 105,000 to Soldier Field in Chicago.

Since then the decline has been steady. With most big fights televised and local blackouts rare, it's uncommon today to see more than 10-15,000 fans attending even the biggest shows, at least outside of the thousands who flock to see the Philippines' Luisito Espinosa defend the WBC featherweight title in his homeland.

This makes the Chavez-Haugen event, which was held in the Estadio Azteca in Mexico City, even more remarkable. Chavez was the real draw, of course, but some of the credit for the record-breaking gate must go to "The Mutt," who fearlessly enraged the locals—thereby increasing interest—by insulting the champion with, among other things, claims that Chavez' record was padded with "a lot of Tijuana taxi crab drivers." All the factors required to produce a record-breaking event—a national icon against a villainous, foreign opponent, a skilled promoter in Don King, and a country's almost maniacal love for their hero—came together at once. Such a formation is a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence.



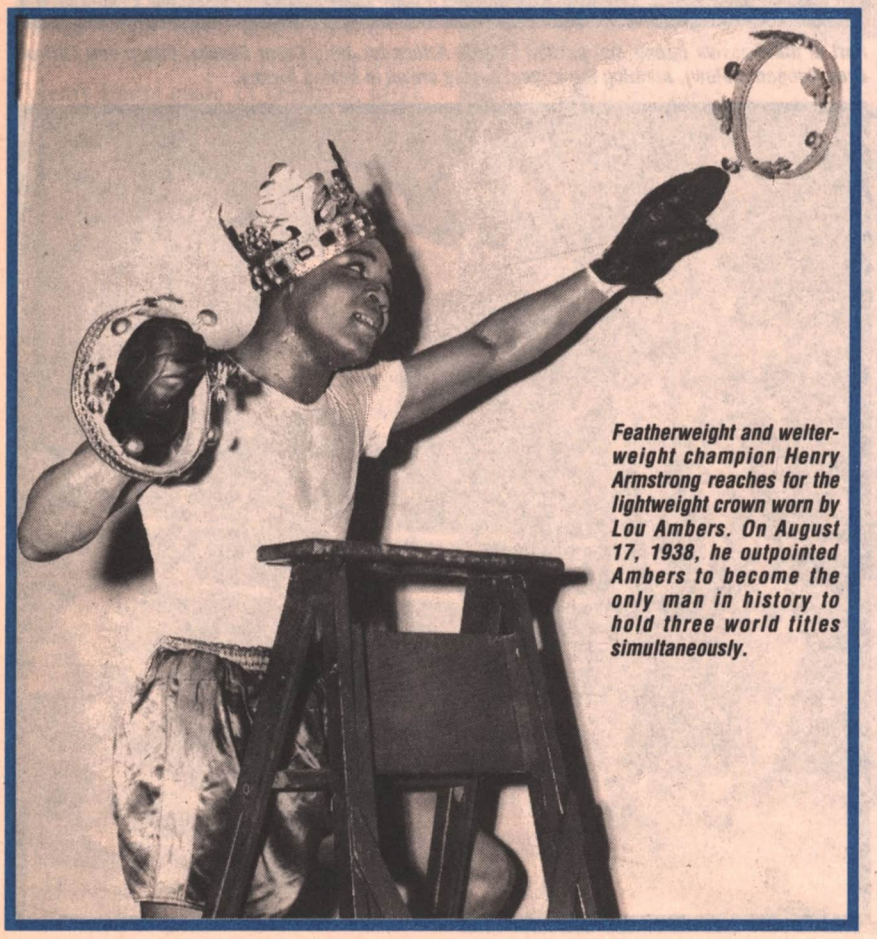
*Part of the massive throng that packed Estadio Azteca for Julio Cesar Chavez' fifth-round TKO of Greg Haugen (below), creating the largest paying crowd in boxing history.*




**Oldest To Contend For Heavyweight Title: 45 (George Foreman)**

Most of us laughed when Big George returned to the ring in 1987 and told us he would be king again. We stopped laughing and started pinching ourselves when he starched Michael Moorer in '94 to win the IBF title. With more and more fighters battling into their late-30s and beyond, it's easy to think that sooner or later,

*What are the chances of another 45-year-old man challenging for—and winning—the heavyweight title as George Foreman did in 1994, when he knocked out Michael Moorer?*



*Featherweight and welterweight champion Henry Armstrong reaches for the lightweight crown worn by Lou Ambers. On August 17, 1938, he outpointed Ambers to become the only man in history to hold three world titles simultaneously.*

Foreman's record will be broken—but don't be fooled.

The achievement is safe, for several reasons. First, Foreman was tutored in the art by another great old-timer, Archie Moore. "The Old Mongoose," who didn't win the light heavyweight title until he was 39, was with Foreman throughout his first incarnation as a young contender and then a champion in the '70s, and returned for much of Foreman's comeback run. Surely, he shared some valuable secrets. Secondly, Foreman's popularity, as much as his punch, netted him the shot at Moorer. It will be a long time before we see another 40-plus fighter with enough box office appeal and charisma to get a shot at the title. And lastly, Foreman enjoys a remarkable well of strength, conviction, and confidence that allowed him to will himself through the deficiencies his age created. In moments when lesser men would surely have submitted—the Holyfield and Alex Stewart fights come to mind—Foreman pressed on. We will never see another like him.

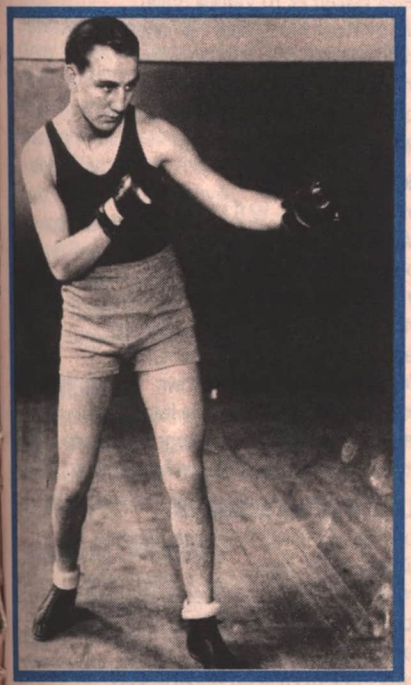
**Simultaneous Reigns In Most Different Weight Classes: Three (Henry Armstrong)**

The principle reason that "Hammerin' Hank's" feat from the late-'30s will never be duplicated, much less surpassed, is that the governing bodies in power today prohibit fighters from holding a title in more than one weight class at a time. If they didn't, you could be reasonably sure that such fighters as Oscar De La Hoya, Felix Trinidad, and Pernell Whitaker would have at least attempted it by now.

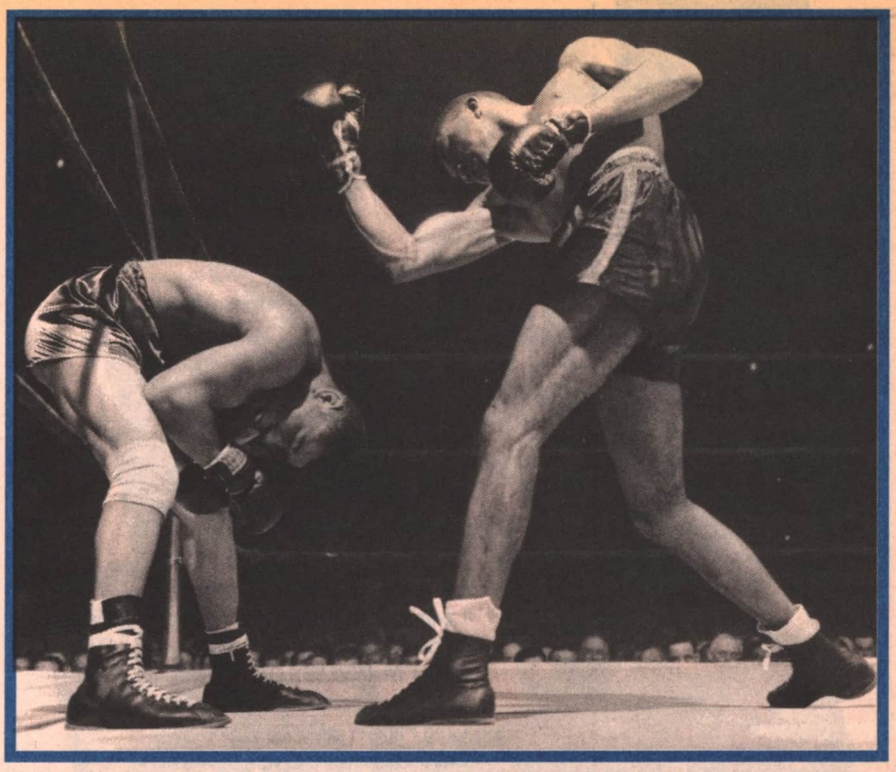
Even if the rules didn't forbid it, however, it's difficult to envision another fighter accomplishing what Armstrong did in an age that pre-dated the junior divisions we know today. He didn't go up by four pounds at a time as today's champions do; his jump from featherweight to welterweight spanned a full 20 pounds. Try to picture WBA featherweight champ Fred Norwood, for example, jumping up to welterweight and taking out De La Hoya, then dropping down to lightweight and dethroning IBF kingpin Shane Mosley. Ludicrous, right? Yet this is essentially what Armstrong did in besting Petey Sarron, Barney Ross, and Lou Ambers, for the feather, welter, and lightweight belts, respectively. This one is written in stone.

### Largest Live Gate: $35,864,000 (Beau Jack W 10 Bob Montgomery)

In most respects, there was nothing terribly significant about this bout. While popular, neither Jack nor Montgomery, who were meeting for the fourth and final time in their series, had the kind of star power to command an extraordinary gate like this. Indeed, a "mere" 15,822 fans filed into Madison Square Garden to watch Jack take a majority decision after 10 uneventful rounds. But in this case, as with most others, timing was everything. It was August 1944, and World War II was raging in Europe. The gate, which would have been ordinary at any other point in history, was boosted to the stratosphere through the concurrent sale of war bonds. To grasp the overwhelming significance of a near $36-million gate, consider that when Muhammad Ali regained the heavyweight title from Leon Spinks in 1978 in front of more than 63,000 fans at the Louisiana Superdome, receipts totaled just under $5-million. When Larry Holmes and Gerry Cooney met in Las Vegas four years later in what at the time was a huge event, the live gate brought in a little over $6-million. No fight—before or since—has come close to equaling what was accomplished by Jack, Montgomery, and 15,822 of their closest friends.



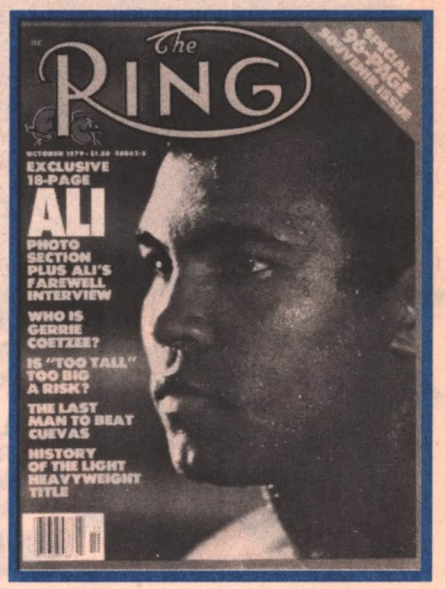
*Jackie Fields became the youngest boxer ever to win an Olympic gold medal when he captured featherweight honors in 1924. Fields went on to win the welterweight title on two occassions as a professional.*



*Beau Jack ducks under Bob Montgomery's right uppercut during their historic 1944 non-title bout at Madison Square Garden. The fight, which Jack won via decision, generated a live gate of more than $35-million.*

### Youngest to win Olympic gold medal: 16 (Jackie Fields)

As he stood on the podium while a gold medal was draped around his neck at the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris, 16-year-old Jacob Finklestein from Chicago couldn't possibly have known that he was making permanent history. The fighter who would later be known as world welterweight champion Jackie Fields didn't know then that shortly after his achievement, the powers that governed amateur boxing would change the age requirement so that no fighter under 17 could compete internationally. Talk about backing into the record books. Even so, the list of teenage Olympic gold medalists is fairly short. Both Floyd Patterson ('52) and Meldrick Taylor ('84) found Olympic gold at the tender age of 17, and Leo Randolph ('76) and Muhammad Ali ('60) were 18 when they mined gold. On the average, Olympic gold medalists are in their early-20s, which makes Fields' achievement even more significant. He was literally a boy fighting men. Another interesting note to Fields' Olympic triumph is that in the final round he defeated fellow amateur star Joseph Salas. Like Fields, Salas represented the United States.




*Guess who has been on the cover of THE RING more than any other fighter?*

### Most Appearances On The Cover Of THE RING: 78 (Muhammad Ali)

At one point Ali appeared on 10 covers in a row, and why not? He is to boxing what Babe Ruth is to baseball, what Michael Jordan is to basketball, what Beethoven is to music. There has quite simply never been a figure who so completely transcended the sport: not Jack Dempsey, not Joe Louis, not Rocky Marciano, not Sugar Ray Leonard or

*(Continued on page 64)*

# SUMMARY

## HEAVYWEIGHTS
Lennox Lewis KO 5 Shannon Briggs
*(Retains WBC Title)*
Jimmy Thunder W 10 Tim Witherspoon
Andrew Golota KO 6 Eli Dixon
Chris Byrd KO 6 Derek Amos
Herbie Hide KO 1 Damon Reed
David Tua KO 3 Cleveland Woods
Kirk Johnson KO 1 Rocky Pepeli
Hasim Rahman KO 2 Steve Pannell
Larry Donald W 10 Ross Puritty
Lawrence Clay-Bey KO 4 Nate Tubbs
Lawrence Clay-Bey KO 2 Abdul-Azim Muhaymin
Monte Barrett KO 1 Jeff Pegues
Mount Whitaker W 8 Garing Lane
Razor Ruddock KO 4 Brian Yates
Greg Page W 8 Marion Wilson
Phil Jackson KO 3 Bryant Smith
Robert Hawkins W 10 Boris Powell
Richie Melito KO 2 Melton Bowen
Justin Fortune W 12 Tony Fiso
Vitaly Klitschko KO 3 Louis Monaco
Vitaly Klitschko KO 2 Levi Billups
Wolfgramm KO 1 Rick Sullivan

## CRUISERWEIGHTS
Imamu Mayfield KO 11 Terry Dunstan
*(Retains IBF Title)*
Carl Thompson W 12 Chris Eubank
David Izegwire KO 4 Calvin Smith
Robert Norton KO 2 Adrian Nicolae
Kelly Oliver KO 6 Brian LaSpada

## LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Roy Jones KO 4 Virgil Hill
*(Non-Title Bout)*
Montell Griffin KO 9 Kenny Lopez
Henry Wharton W 8 Frank Edmondson
Will Taylor KO 5 James Gatlin
Quincy Taylor KO 2 Melvin Wynn
Chris Johnson KO 1 Napoleon Pitt

## SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Richie Woodhall W 12 Thulane Malinga
*(Wins WBC Title)*
Frank Liles W 12 Andrei Schkalikov
*(Retains WBA Title)*
Charles Brewer KO 10 Herol Graham
*(Retains IBF Title)*
Joe Calzaghe KO 8 Juan Carlos Gimenez
Thomas Tate KO 3 Anwar Oshana
Demetrius Davis W 10 Joseph Kiwanuka
Eric Lucas KO 5 Segundo Mercado
Dean Francis KO 12 Mark Baker
David Starie W 12 Clinton Woods
Mads Larsen KO 7 Bruno Godoy

## MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Antwun Echols KO 8 Kevin Tillman
Paul Jones W 12 Johnson Tshuma
Troy Waters KO 7 Ambrose Mlilo
Giovanni Pretorius KO 2 Jorge Sclarandi
Stephane Ouellet KO 3 Alex Hilton
Pedro Ortega KO 11 Luis Perez
Angel Hernandez KO 4 Jorge Luis Vado
Hercules Kyvelos KO 1 Dave Horvath
Rhoshii Wells W 6 Carlton Holland

## JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Tony Marshall KO 11 Anthony Jones
Fernando Vargas KO 2 Romallis Ellis
Rodney Jones W 10 Luis Vazquez
Tony Lopez W 8 Agustin Caballero
Adrian Dodson KO 4 Nestor Tobias
Kevin Kelly KO 7 Nico Toriri
Teddy Reid W 8 Juan LaPorte
Daniel Santos Tech. Draw 1 Jose Luis Verdugo

## WELTERWEIGHTS
Felix Trinidad KO 4 Mahenge Zulu
*(Retains IBF Title)*
Vernon Forrest KO 2 Gilbert Flores
Oba Carr W 10 Juan Rodriguez
Rafael Ruelas KO 2 Tim Scott
Patrick Charpentier KO 2 Rene Uranga
Andrei Pestriaev KO 2 Oscar Delgado
James Page KO 3 Luis Carmona
Paul Nave W 12 Greg Haugen
Soren Sondergaard W 12 Juan Carlos Villarreal
Juan Coggi W 8 Silvio Rojas
Andrew Lewis KO 2 Gerald Reed

## JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Kostya Tszyu KO 1 Calvin Grove
Cesar Bazan W 10 Verdell Smith
Mickey Ward KO 3 Mark Fernandez
Antonio Diaz KO 2 Alberto Cortes
Chongkil Kim W 10 Jungbun Kim
Soren Sondergaard W 8 Edwin Murillo
Zab Judah KO 2 Angel Beltre

## LIGHTWEIGHTS
Orzubek Nazarov W 8 Freddy Cruz
*(Non-Title Bout)*
Louie Leija W 12 Bruno Wartelle
Orlando Canizales KO 7 Jose Montes
Artur Grigorijan KO 6 Marco Rudolph
Ben Tackie KO 10 Edwin Santana
Wayne Rigby KO 8 Matt Brown
Rick Yoshimura KO 5 Yoichi Iwamoto
Oscar Garcia Cano W 12 Jorge Luis Lopez
Hiroyuki Sakamoto KO 1 Jun Mondonedo

## JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Yong Soo Choi KO 9 Gilberto Serrano
*(Retains WBA Title)*
Arnulfo Castillo W 10 Armando Bosques
Floyd Mayweather W 10 Gustavo Cuello
Derrick Gainer KO 3 Wilson Santos
Jorge Paez KO 6 Juan Angel Macias
Dean Pithie KO 9 Paul Griffin
Takanori Hatakeyama KO 9 Koji Arisawa
Gary St. Clair D 10 Bernard Harris
Diego Corrales KO 1 Juan Salazar

### FEATHERWEIGHTS
Manuel Medina W 12 Hector Lizarraga
*(Wins IBF Title)*
Fred Norwood W 12 Antonio Cermeno
*(Wins Vacant WBA Title)*
Naseem Hamed KO 7 Wilfredo Vazquez
Paul Ingle W 12 Trust Ndlovu
Cassius Baloyi W 12 Sergio Liendo
Lewis Wood W 12 David Santos
Guty Espadas W 10 Agapito Sanchez
Rey Jamili KO 5 Lito Wayan
Takeo Imaoka KO 1 Atsushi Tamaki
Ric Ramirez W 12 Chu Ferrer
Willie Jorrin KO 4 Enrique Valenzuela
Edgar Garcia KO 1 Augie Sanchez

### JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
Erik Morales KO 6 Remigio Daniel Molina
*(Retains WBC Title)*
Wayne McCullough W 10 Oscar Antonio Salas
Amel Barotillo KO 2 Muhammad Fandi
Carlos Navarro KO 6 Roberto Lopez
Patrick Mullings KO 3 Martin Krastev
Angel Chacon W 12 Juan Manuel Chavez
Rey Jamili W 10 Brutus Gastador
Isaac Sentuwa KO 4 Joel Junio
Kozo Ishii KO 5 Changkyun Oh

### BANTAMWEIGHTS
Tim Austin KO 2 Paul Lloyd
*(Retains IBF Title)*
Jorge Eliecer Julio KO 9 Daniel Jiminez
Johnny Bredahl W 12 Alexander Yagupov
Aristead Clayton W 12 Nestor Lopez
Pone Saengmarakot W 10 Wihok Jockgym

### JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
Gerry Penalosa Tech. Draw 2 Joel Luna Zarate
*(Retains WBC Title)*
Saen Sow Ploenchit KO 6 Rico Paquibot
Veeraphol Sahaprom KO 6 Joven Jorda
Akihiko Nago KO 9 Yoshiaki Matsukura
Felix Marfa W 10 Joel Avila
Manuel Herrera KO 2 Santana Baez
Takato Toguchi KO 2 Rudy Idano
Hayato Asai KO 3 Pinoy Montejo
Bernie Torres KO 7 Celso Danggod
Pedro Pena W 8 Alfaro Salinas

### FLYWEIGHTS
Adey Lewis KO 3 Nicky Wilders
Jason Booth KO 1 Louis Veitch
Nolito Cabato W 10 Celes Kobayashi
Jesper Jensen W 8 Rafael Torres

### JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS
Andy Tabanas Tech. Win 7 Manny Melchor
Tomas Rivera W 10 Jesus Chong
Eugene Gonzales W 10 Ric Magramo
Rolando Pascua KO 6 Marpichit Utaitawee

### STRAWWEIGHTS
Randy Mangubat KO 3 Oro Amisola
Carmelo Caceres KO 9 Marlon Gayundato
Wandee Charoen W 10 Rakchai Dechakul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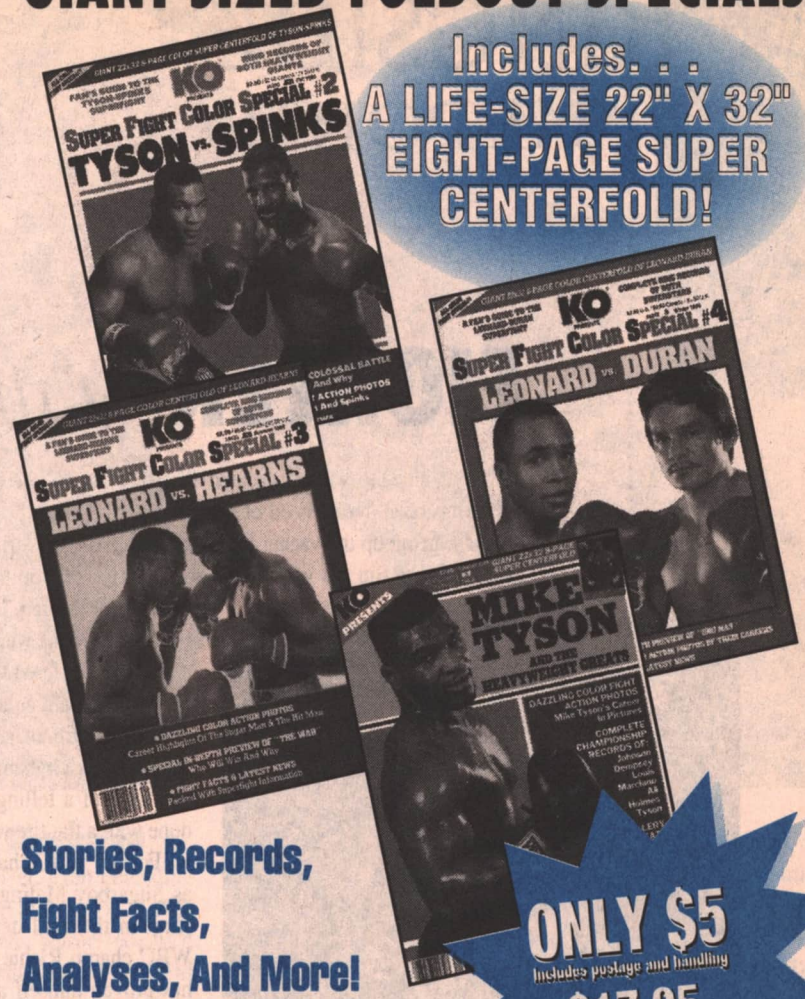


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# RINGSIDE REPORTS

## FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

Ever since Roy Jones vacated the IBF super middleweight title in late-1996, the 168-pound division has been in dire need of a superstar. And even though Brewer succeeded Jones as IBF champ by scarfing up the vacant IBF title in June of '97, virtually nobody thought "The Hatchet" would be that superstar. But the way things are looking now, on the heels of Brewer's gutsy knockout of Herol Graham on March 28, the Philadelphian may just be the number-one fighter in the weight class.

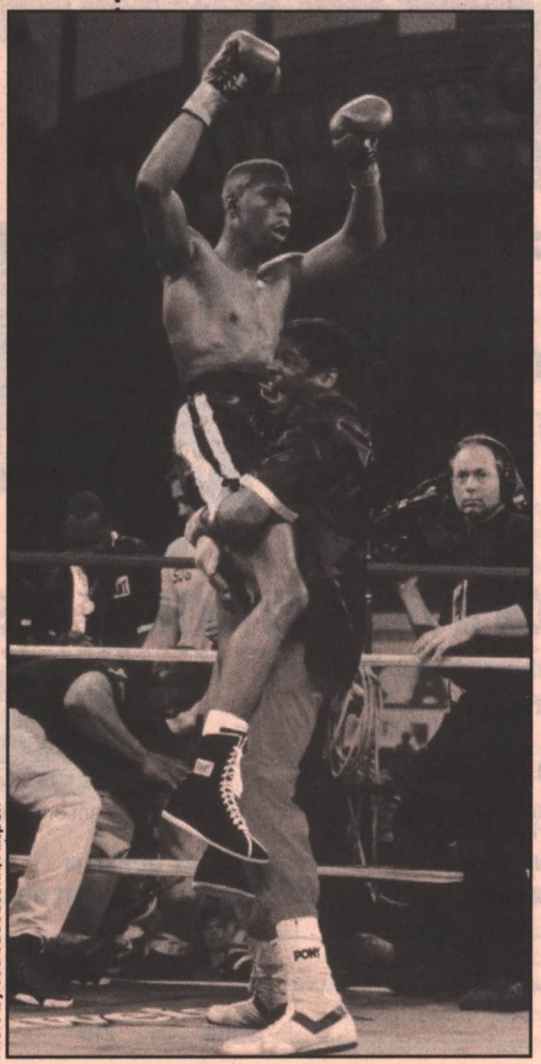
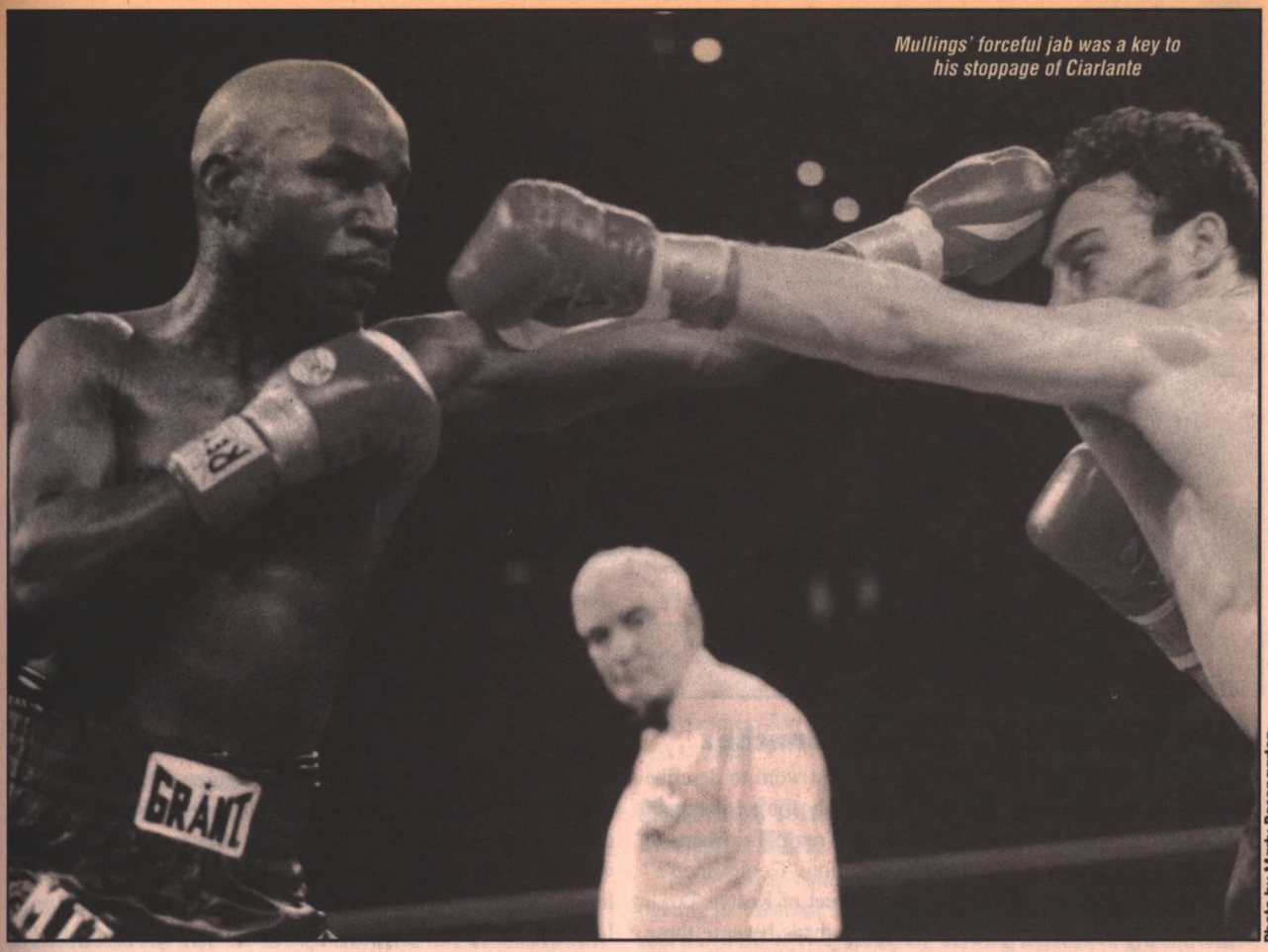


Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

Brewer suffered two knockdowns in the third round, and fought most of the fight on a badly sprained right ankle, but caught up with the slippery Englishman in the 10th and became only the third man to knock out Graham in his 54-fight career. Catching Graham with any kind of a telling blow is difficult, so Brewer getting the job done with a flat tire was nothing short of spectacular.

Former WBC champ Robin Reid has the looks to be a star, but, as Sugarboy Malinga showed last December, he comes up a bit short in the skill department. Welshman Joe Calzaghe and new WBC champ Richie Woodhall are both talented, but neither man has proven himself as the standout among the super middle pack. And the universally agreed upon top 168-pounder in the world, WBA champ Frank Liles, turned in a lethargic non-effort in barely outpointing unheralded Russian Andrei Schkalikov six days after Brewer's big win. Once his injured ankle heals, The Hatchet should be primed to chop his way to the top.

# Charles Brewer




*Mullings' forceful jab was a key to his stoppage of Ciarlante*

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

## Keith Mullings KO 5 David Ciarlante

*Atlantic City, New Jersey:* When it was over, even defending WBC super welterweight champion Mullings, 16-4-1 (11), had to feel sorry for fifth-round TKO victim Ciarlante, whose face he'd just turned into a nauseating fright mask. The challenger's nose had been broken and the skin around both eyes transformed into a mass of purple-red bruises. His right eye was swollen completely shut and there was a large ridge of bloated flesh running across his forehead. If you didn't know better, you would have sworn that the previously undefeated Italian had been worked over by a mugger wielding a tire iron.

Actually, Ciarlante, 23-1 (13), claimed that the top of Mullings' shaven skull had inflicted most of the grotesque facial damage that prompted ringside physician Howard Taylor to advise referee Larry O'Connell (England) to stop the fight at the end of the fifth round. And while there were certainly some inadvertent head clashes along the way, Mullings' short, jolting blows also had a lot to do with the appalling state of Ciarlante's countenance at the conclusion of the scheduled 12-rounder at Trump Taj Mahal.

Although Mullings' punches packed far more power than Ciarlante's, the challenger was willing to mix it up and scored frequently with quick rights as the champion advanced. Mullings' timing seemed off, but his ramrod jab found the target often enough to offset Ciarlante's greater output.

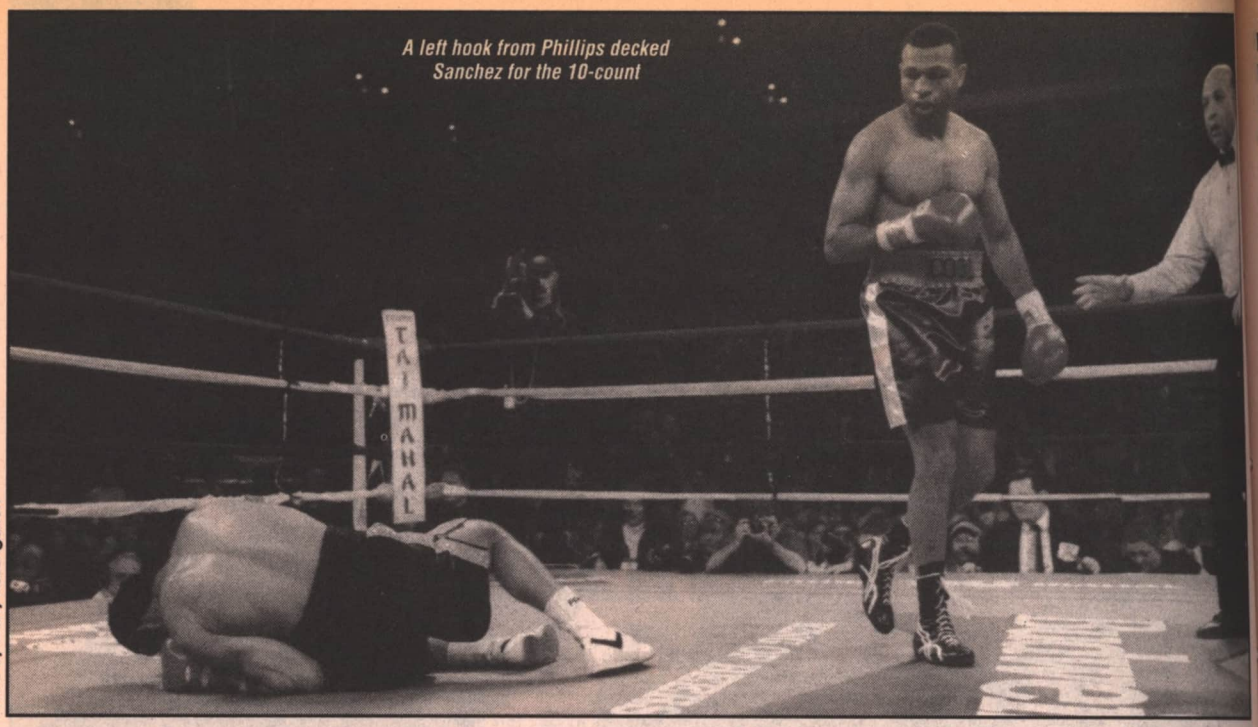
The 27-year-old Ciarlante gave an especially spirited effort in the fifth, and succeeded in outpunching the champion in several brisk exchanges. But by the end of the round, Mullings, 30, was coming on strong with punishing shots to the face, and Ciarlante trudged back to his corner looking like a man who'd dived head-first into an empty swimming pool.

Mullings, making his first defense of the title he won from Terry Norris in December 1997, was ahead on only one official scorecard after five completed rounds. The 48-47 tally in his favor was turned in by England's John Keane, while Barbara Perez (USA) had Ciarlante ahead 49-46. Italian scorekeeper Sergio Silvi had it even at 48-48. THE RING had the game challenger ahead by 48-47, but he was fighting a war of attrition he couldn't win, and O'Connell had no choice but to stop what had become a butchering.

"I still feel like I'm the underdog, and you can see why," said Mullings, who was on the wrong end of a controversial decision to then-IBF 154-pound titlist Raul Marquez last September. "In my eyes, I'm undefeated. But what can I do? I know now I have to stop everybody. I can't leave it up to the judges."

Both Mullings and his manager, Arnie Rosenthal, eagerly endorsed promoter Bob Arum's suggestion that Mullings take on WBA welterweight champion Ike Quartey next. But it looks like Quartey has priced himself out of the match and that Mullings will be on the shelf until late-summer.

Television: HBO
Promoter: Top Rank
(3-14-98)
*Nigel Collins*




A left hook from Phillips decked Sanchez for the 10-count

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

## Vince Phillips KO 1 Alfonso Sanchez

*Atlantic City, New Jersey:* Probably the best word to describe Phillips' stunningly quick victory over highly touted prospect Sanchez at the Mark G. Etess Arena at the Trump Taj Mahal is "mastery." IBF junior welterweight champion "Cool Vince's" return from drug addiction and remarkable upset of Kostya Tszyu last year have been well-documented, but, perhaps because those fascinating stories seem to overshadow everything else he does, little has been said about the near-perfection Phillips exhibits in the ring. After the way he picked Sanchez apart so flawlessly and efficiently, however, the 34-year-old Phillips' sheer talents can no longer be overlooked.

Sanchez, 139, San Pedro, Mexico, appeared to be in control for the first two minutes of the fight, as he thrust busy jabs and bodyshots in the direction of the surprisingly dormant champion. But, in fact, Phillips, 140, Pensacola, Florida, was trying to figure out the timing of Sanchez' punches. And figure it out he did.

Phillips twice caught Sanchez leaning in to throw lead rights, finding the mark with counter right hands to the face. Phillips knew at this point that "Poncho" was his, and one more expertly timed counter set up the finish. Sanchez swung a wild right, but Phillips' right hand grazed his chin first. The challenger's wide hook sailed over the crouched Phillips, and the champion let loose a thudding left hook to Sanchez' unprotected temple. Sanchez crashed to his hands and knees, and didn't even attempt to rise before referee Joe Cortez (USA) reached the count of 10. The official time of the knockout was 2:30.

For Sanchez, 18-2 (16), the defeat sets him back even farther than his single-bodyshot kayo loss against Mickey Ward last year. That first stain on his record was viewed by most as a fluke, but the quick and decisive manner in which Phillips disposed of the 26-year-old Mexican make it hard to envision him challenging for another title anytime soon.

Phillips, on the other hand, may have positioned himself for the biggest payday of his career with his third successful title defense, but it will have to come outside his natural weight class. The IBF champ is 36-0 at 140 pounds—39-3 (28) overall—and it's hard to dispute that he's the king of the junior welterweight division. But with Tszyu seemingly avoiding a rematch, and Julio Cesar Chavez looking toward a much bigger payday in a rematch with Oscar De La Hoya, Phillips seems unlikely to find a million-dollar fight at 140.

Television: HBO
Promoter: Top Rank
(3-14-98)
*Eric Raskin*

## Graciano Rocchigiani W 12 Michael Nunn

*Berlin, Germany:* Controversy reigned for various reasons at the Max Schmeling Arena. Rocchigiani, 174, Germany, prevailed by split decision, but Dan Goossen, promoter of Nunn, 174, Davenport, Iowa, claimed robbery. And although the bout was believed by many to be for the vacant WBC light heavyweight title, Roy Jones had not yet given up that belt at press time, making this fight for the interim title. Amid all the other business WBC President Jose Sulaiman must turn his attention to following recent fiascos, it is to be hoped he can sort this out.

Certainly, Jones would have little or no difficulty in sorting out either Rocchigiani, 40-4-1 (19), or Nunn, 52-4 (34), whom he refused to fight for the meager money offered after the fight went to purse bids last year. Nunn, 34, was the more active, but his power has not improved with age. Rocchigiani, 34, managed to block a lot of the blows with his arms and gloves and wasted little effort himself. But whether he landed enough to justify the verdict in his favor is a major doubt.

Nunn's performance was clearly affected, though, by the repeated warnings administered by Belgian referee Daniel Van De Wiele. The official had words with Nunn in almost every round for what

he regarded as infringements ranging from ducking too low and headbutting his foe, to using his elbows and extending his arm to keep the German at bay. His light punches never troubled Rocchigiani, who maintained a tight defense throughout.

Nunn, once viewed as a successor to Ray Leonard before evolving into a once-bitten, twice-shy boxer of some reluctance, did some good work to the body, but was rocked by a strong right toward the end of the fourth. He recovered well, though, and at times handily outboxed his more cumbersome opponent. But Rocchigiani always came back with heavier looking hooks and uppercuts, and in the end was rewarded for this by the judges.

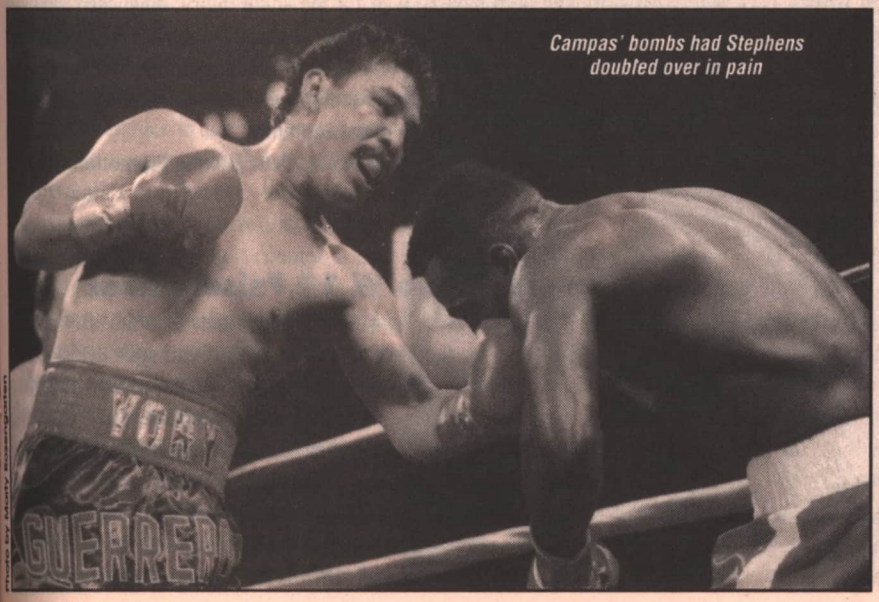
British judge Richie Davies scored emphatically for the German, 118-111, while Ken Morita (USA) saw it 115-113 for Rocchigiani. Juan Jose Guerro (Mexico) had it 116-113 for Nunn, and THE RING also scored in the American's favor, 115-113. Goossen protested the decision immediately thereafter, claiming German commissioners seated at ringside illegally slipped Rocchigiani's corner the judges' scores between rounds. Said Nunn: "My people were telling me I was winning by five or six points. I just laughed when I heard the decision."

Promoter: Wilfred Sauerland
(3-21-98)
*Brian Doogan*

## Yory Boy Campas KO 3 Anthony Stephens

*Ledyard, Connecticut:* The pressure was on for IBF junior middleweight champion Campas. It was his first title defense, and the opponent was a hungry two-time title challenger well aware that this could be his last shot. It was the main event of a nationally televised fight card, going head-to-head with the Academy Awards. And looking on from the broadcast table at Foxwoods Casino was none other than Oscar De La Hoya, the undefeated WBC welterweight champion whom Campas was hoping to face in the fall.

But Campas rose to the occasion. In fact, the Mexican rose a little too high, as he inflicted so much punishment in the third round that Stephens had to quit in his corner just when things were getting interesting.



*Campas' bombs had Stephens doubled over in pain*

The events of the opening round came as no surprise to those familiar with Campas, as he was soundly outboxed and had a cut opened on the side of his nose. While Stephens, 153¼, Metairie, Louisiana, worked behind a busy jab, Campas, 152¾, Navojoa, Mexico, absorbed the challenger's offerings and laid the groundwork for his upcoming stoppage with occasional bodyshots. The 26-year-old champion began putting together combinations to the body and head in the second round, but also ate a pair of fine lead right hands from Stephens.

The third round began with a bang, as Stephens, 33, staggered Campas with a clean right cross. The challenger scored moments later with another right, but Campas, 70-2 (60), fired back with a left hook and a slew of bodyshots. A look of exhaustion overtook Stephens midway through the round, and Campas, still looking fresh, pounced with damaging combinations to the body. Stephens was assaulted everywhere from his stomach and ribcage up to his shoulders, but remained on his feet until the bell. He was unable to leave his stool, however, at the start of round four, and the fight was stopped. Insisting that his left shoulder was dislocated, and certainly feeling the effects of Campas' bodypunching, Stephens, 29-9-2 (17), could take no more.

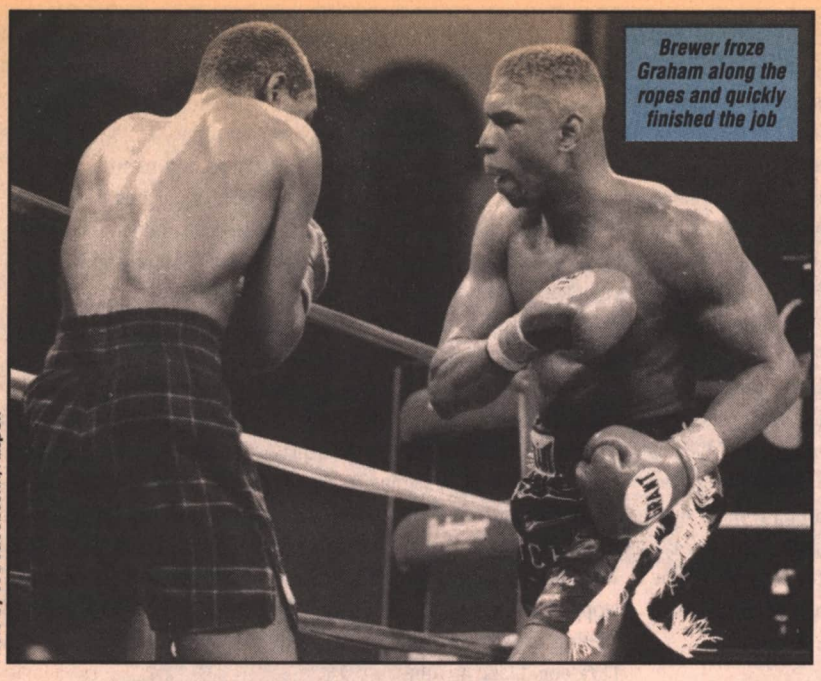
Television: FOX
Promoter: Top Rank
(3-23-98)

## Chatchai Dutchboy Gym W 12 Yongjin Kim

*Surat Thani, Thailand:* Skillful speedster Chatchai (previously fighting as Chatchai Sasakul and then Chatchai Elite-Gym), 111½, kept the WBC flyweight title by showing impressive grit and determination. He endured an injury to his right hand, fought only with his left hand, and earned a tough unanimous decision over aggressive Korean Kim, 111½, over 12 heats. Judges Luis Escalona (USA), Takehaki Kanaya (Japan), and Enrique Portacarrero Lopez (Nicaragua) all scored it decisively for Chatchai, at 117-111, 119-111, and 119-111, respectively.

For Chatchai, it was not such an easy defense as the lopsided scores indicated. The Thailander, an excellent combination puncher who had dethroned previously unbeaten Yuri Arbachakov by an upset nod last November, had suffered a sprained right wrist during his workout, but reportedly tried not to disclose his mishap. Chatchai was obliged to fight almost as a one-handed soldier in the later rounds.

The faster champ got off to the better start, dominating the first five rounds with his sharp jabs and combinations, plus his good footwork. Chatchai seemed to begin to feel the pain in his right hand in the sixth, and Kim, an inaccurate but onrushing puncher, caught him with a right uppercut to stun him temporarily. After that, it became a tough battle for Chatchai, but he continued piling up points, albeit by smaller margins than in the earlier



Brewer froze Graham along the ropes and quickly finished the job

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

rounds. Kim kept aiming at the breadbasket of the champ to stop his footwork. The challenger occasionally caught him with persistent bodyshots and combinations to the face, but Chatchai outmaneuvered and outpunched the less skillful Korean in the seventh. By the ninth, Chatchai's left eye was somewhat swollen due to Kim's busy rallies.

Kim showed his best in the 10th, when he landed a solid right and had the champ at bay. Aware of being behind on points, Kim did his best to mix it up, but Chatchai cleverly returned to his original hit-and-run strategy to regain control over the last two sessions.

Chatchai, 28, boosted his mark to 32-1 (23), while Kim, 27, who showed his heart as well as his tremendous stamina, fell to 20-3-1 (13).

(2-27-98)

*Joe Koizumi*

## Charles Brewer KO 10 Herol Graham

*Atlantic City, New Jersey:* Had this fight, the main undercard bout in support of Lennox Lewis-Shannon Briggs, been shown on HBO, Brewer might have done away with his reputation as one of boxing's least deserving, least respected world champions overnight. With a gritty performance against tricky veteran southpaw Graham, culminating with an impressive stoppage, Brewer proved himself worthy of the IBF super middleweight belt he wears, while also showing he can make an exciting fight against a normally boring opponent. What a shame no Americans outside the 9,173 fans in attendance at the Boardwalk Convention Hall got to see it.

At the outset, Graham, 167, Sheffield, England, strayed from his typical defensive approach, aggressively throwing lead lefts at the champion. But it was Brewer, 168, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who scored the biggest blow in the opening round, a left hook that temporarily staggered "The Bomber." After starting the second round aggressively as well, Graham slowly eased into the style that suits him best, ducking and dodging while using his pesky jab to set up his straight left. Brewer slipped to the canvas midway through the second, and though it wasn't ruled a knockdown, "The Hatchet" was in pain. It was revealed after the fight that Brewer had turned his right ankle at that point, an injury that would make his pursuit of Graham a struggle the rest of the way.

Early in the third round, Brewer appeared to be pushed to the canvas, his tender ankle buckling beneath him, but referee Earl Morton (USA) ruled it a knockdown for the challenger. An incensed Brewer began swinging wildly at Graham, and left himself open to a trio of forceful lefts that put the champion on the canvas. Brewer got up and cleared his head, however, hurting Graham with a right hand and pummeling him along the ropes as the round came to an end.

The action slowed down from that point on, as the 38-year-old Graham dictated the pace, luring Brewer into the same game of cat-and-mouse he used to upend Vinny Pazienza last December. Brewer, 28, scored with an outstanding counter left hook in the fourth, but Graham's defensive skills and thudding lefts caused problems for the mildly hobbled Brewer throughout the next few rounds. Brewer caught the Brit with a right hand over the top and a strong left to the jaw in the seventh, but spent much of the eighth flailing wildly at the slick southpaw. But with his right eye swelling noticeably, and Graham seemingly on the verge of taking complete control, Brewer snuck in a left hook midway through the 10th that froze the challenger along the ropes. The Hatchet let loose with an eight-punch combination, with the key shot being a clean right to the chin that caused Graham to fold forward. Morton stepped in quickly—perhaps a bit too quickly—but Graham and his corner offered no protest when the fight was stopped at 1:34 of the 10th.

At the time of the stoppage, Brewer led 86-84 on judge George Hill's (USA) card, Graham was up 85-84 on Al DeVito's (USA) card, and Roy Francis (England) had the fight even at 86-86. Graham, 48-6 (28), is now 0-3 in world title fights, and probably won't be getting another chance. Brewer, 31-5 (21), successful in his second title defense, finally seems ready for the big time—though he'll have to wait for the ankle injury, diagnosed afterward as a severe sprain, to heal. He's free of the reputation that he can't handle lefties, and, for those in attendance for his conquest of Graham, that he isn't particularly exciting or talented. Next time, HBO's a lot less likely to pass on him.

Promoters: Panix Promotions, Peltz Boxing Promotions Inc.

(3-28-98)

*Eric Raskin*

## Zolani Petelo W 12 Faisol Akbar

*Hammanskraal, South Africa:* Petelo defended the IBF mini-flyweight title for the first time with a 12-round split decision over Indonesian challenger Akbar before an estimated crowd of 2,500 at the Carousel gambling resort. The split decision was a joke, with Indonesian official Mohammed Binsjech handing in a ridiculous card of 115-113 in favor of his countryman, while Rumeggio Ruggeri (Italy) was also off the mark in scoring it just 115-113 for Petelo. The only official who got it right was South African Clement Martin, with a scorecard of 118-110 for the defending champion.

The fans were thrilled with 12 rounds of non-stop action as southpaw Petelo fought an intelligent fight. The 105-pound champ worked behind his jab to keep the shorter Indonesian out of range, piling up points to easily win nine or 10 rounds in the opinion of most ringsiders.

Despite Akbar's greater experience and high workrate, the South African was able to avoid most of the attacks launched by the challenger. Facing distinct disadvantages in height and reach, Akbar decided to wing away from the first round, but the champion kept his cool despite the fiery rushes from Akbar. Petelo moved in and out and picked his spots wisely over the course of an extremely polished performance. The 22-year-old Petelo improved to 12-2-2 (6), and Akbar dropped to 37-7. The referee was Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa).

Promoter: Rodney Berman, Golden Gloves
(3-21-98)
*Ron Jackson*

## Richie Woodhall W 12 Sugarboy Malinga

*Telford, England:* Britain's hold on super middleweight trinkets was extended by Woodhall, 166¼, Birmingham, England, who took a convincing, unanimous decision to wrest the WBC 168-pound title from Malinga, 167¾, Johannesburg, South Africa, at the Telford Ice Rink. It was the first defense of Malinga's second reign as WBC champion—his previous reign also ended in his first defense, against Vincenzo Nardiello—and, at 38, he finally decided to hang up the gloves.

Woodhall, 29, declared he would retire if he could not overcome the veteran South African. His only previous shot at a world title ended in a gallant 12th-round defeat to Keith Holmes at middleweight. But Woodhall, 24-1 (14), carried the increased poundage well against Malinga, 42-11 (17), and boxed with conviction from his southpaw stance to join Nigel Benn, Chris Eubank, and Robin Reid as men from the far side of the pond who have risen to the 168-pound summit. Welshman Joe Calzaghe, though not in possession of a world title belt, may be the best in the division.

Malinga looked capable of holding Father Time at bay once more over the first half-dozen rounds despite suffering a knockdown in the third. He outjabbed the home fighter in the first round and remained dangerous in the second, but Woodhall's confidence was boosted considerably when he felled Malinga with a quickfire left-right counter in the final minute of round three. Belgian referee Bob Logist administered a mandatory eight-count that Malinga saw out on his feet, and he proved he was well over the effects by bustling Woodhall backward in the fourth and cutting him above the left eye in the fifth. In the sixth, he scored well to the body and dropped a solid right in Woodhall's jaw.

But Malinga could not maintain the effort and, over the second half of the bout, slowed appreciably. There were some good exchanges, but Woodhall's jab carried sway and he was well on top at the finish. The judges scored convincingly in Woodhall's favor, as Omar Mintun (Mexico) saw it 118-109, Roger Kreitz (Luxembourg) ruled 117-111, and Tom Kaczmarek (USA) had it 118-110, the same as THE RING.

Promoter: Frank Warren
(3-27-98)
*Brian Doogan*

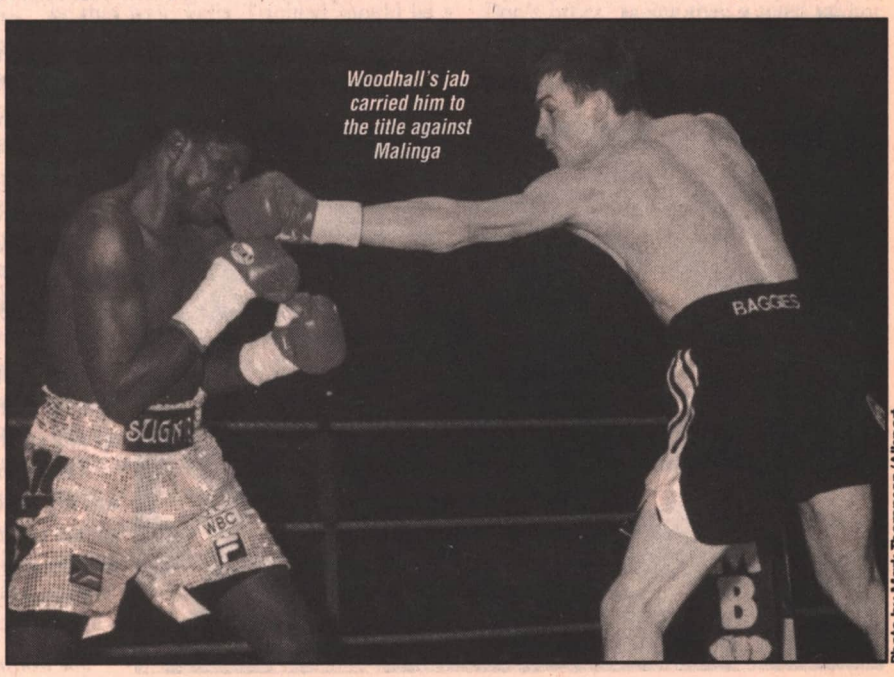
## Tim Austin KO 2 Paul Lloyd

*Hull, England:* It was not the Ice Arena that brought a chill and then total numbness to Lloyd, 118, Ellesmere Port, England, but the frightening power in the fists of Austin, 117½, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, who retained the IBF bantamweight title in clinical fashion. It was the 26-year-old's first defense after having his jaw broken in his title-winning effort against South African Mbulelo Botile in Nashville last July.

Austin was in no mood to experience such trauma again, swarming all over the overwhelmed Lloyd, 17-4 (12), from the outset and finishing him at the earliest opportunity. The 29-year-old challenger perhaps played straight into Austin's explosive hands by coming directly to him, but it is difficult to imagine him faring much better whatever tactics he deployed.

He bravely pressured Austin at the start and tried to drive him back with a left hook and a right over the top. But from the moment Austin, 17-0-1 (16), unhinged Lloyd's legs with a solid left, the result was inevitable, and the only question was how long it would take.

Austin, a bronze medalist at flyweight in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, piled in with one-twos and a succession of lefts that forced Lloyd to the ropes, where respite arrived only with the sound of the bell. This did not delay matters for long, as Austin set Lloyd up with a left before flooring him with a right early in the second. The game challenger rose unsteadily at four, and British referee Dave Parris waved him on. But he was an easy target and, under a



*Woodhall's jab carried him to the title against Malinga*

Photo by Mark Thompson/Allsport

fusillade of punches, the referee intervened just as the towel came hurtling in from the Englishman's corner. The end came, mercifully for Lloyd, at 2:16 of round two.

Promoter: Panix Promotions

(3-28-98)

*Brian Doogan*

## Imamu Mayfield KO 11 Terry Dunstan

*Hull, England:* It took a devastating right hand to haul this one out of the total bore department, with Mayfield, 188, New Brunswick, New Jersey, administering it, and Dunstan, 189¾, Hackney, England, collapsing underneath it. The punch made Mayfield's defense of the IBF cruiserweight title at the Ice Arena, his first since winning the belt from Uriah Grant last November, a successful one.

A low-key sparring session might have sparked more excitement than was on offer for the vast majority of 11 rounds. Both men's counterpunching instincts made for long stretches of inactivity, and by the ninth, referee John Coyle (England) was forced to urge them to earn their night's pay. Others caught on more quickly than Coyle, such as former Olympic lightweight champion Howard Davis Jr., working the champion's corner, who had been banging the canvas since the third in an effort to encourage his charge to step it up. American judge Hilton Whitaker III was satisfied that Mayfield did, having him ahead by 97-92 at the end of 10 rounds. But British judge Larry O'Connell had it closer at 96-95 for the American, while Puerto Rican Samuel Conde saw it 96-93 for Dunstan. If points were awarded for curing insomnia, they might have accumulated world record totals.

Dunstan's right hand landed several times, but never with anything resembling the climactic effect ultimately contained in Mayfield's arsenal. An early sign of what was to come arrived in the fourth when a shot by Mayfield, 18-1 (14), sent Dunstan's legs all ways at once. But the 29-year-old Londoner recovered well and closed the round with a powerful right uppercut. In the fifth, he cut Mayfield, 25, above his right eye, and then he opened a wound on his lip in the sixth.

Dunstan, 17-1 (11), found a home for a couple of rights in the seventh and eighth, but Mayfield answered back by bloodying the challenger's right eye in the ninth. The Brit committed a calamitous error in the 11th by leaving himself unprotected as he lunged in with a right hand, but he was beaten to the punch and fell in a heap against the ropes. He was up at five, but went down again from another right and was counted out at the 1:34 mark.

"I messed up, but I will come back," vowed Dunstan.

Promoter: Panix Promotions

(3-28-98)

*Brian Doogan*

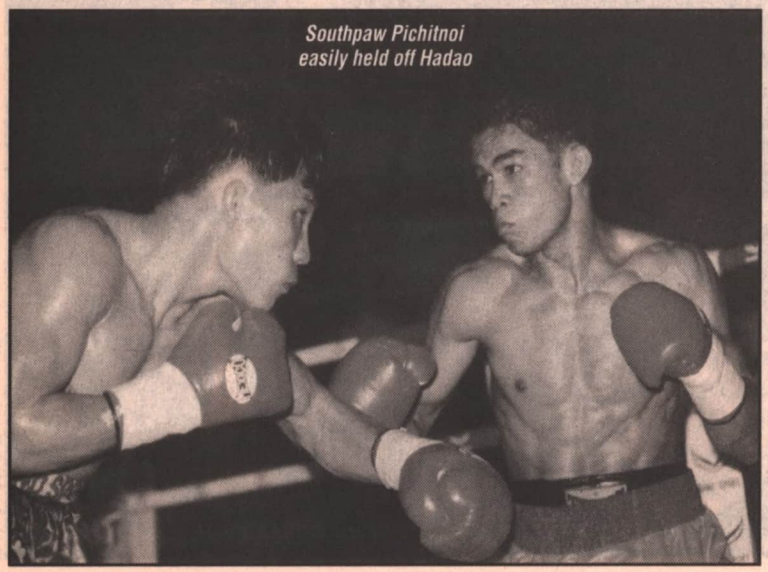
## Pichitnoi C. Siriwat W 12 Hadao C.P. Gym

*Bangkok, Thailand:* Slick-punching Thailander Pichitnoi (previously fighting as Pichitnoi Sithbangprachan), 108, proved too sharp and smart for his compatriot and WBA number-one contender Hadao (previously campaigning as Kaaj Chartbandit), 108, as the champ controlled the bout and floored him with a southpaw left in the 12th and final session to retain the WBA junior flyweight title on a unanimous verdict. Judge Ferdinand Estrella (Philippines) scored the bout 118-111, Derek Milham (Australia) had it 118-112, and Philippe Verbeke (Belgium) saw it 119-108.

Pichitnoi was making his second defense since wresting the 108-pound crown on a stunning second-round stoppage of Japanese lefty Keiji Yamaguchi in Osaka, Japan, in 1996. Hadao, a veteran campaigner at 29, failed to win the WBA throne when he battled to a draw with then-champ Leo Gamez in Bangkok in '94. This mandatory title bout between the fellow countrymen was slated to take place earlier, but it was postponed due to the effects of the notorious recession in Thailand.

The lefty Pichitnoi, 23, started with faster southpaw jabs and straight lefts, while Hadao, an orthodox stylist, responded with left jabs and straight rights. Hadao caught him with roundhouse lefts and rights, and threw solid blows at the speedster in the second. The champ utilized his faster footwork and outboxed his slower but game opponent in the third and fourth.

An accidental collision of heads opened a bad gash on the forehead of Hadao in the fifth. Referee Mitch Halpern (USA) ruled it unintentional, but Hadao kept bleeding from the cut, which became a great handicap for him. The southpaw champ was in command from the sixth through 11th, as he solved the monotonous strategy of Hadao, who just threw left-right combinations to the face and midsection. Pichitnoi often scored with southpaw right hooks, piling up points steadily.



*Southpaw Pichitnoi easily held off Hadao*

With about 30 seconds remaining in the 12th and final session, Pichitnoi, 19-1 (11), landed a well-timed left cross and had Hadao, 36-10-1 (11), sprawling to the deck. Hadao barely regained his feet, looking exhausted and groggy. But Pichitnoi adopted a safety-first way of fighting in the closing moments, opting not to follow up with another assault.

The defeated Hadao announced afterward, "This was my final opportunity to fight for the world title. I am too old to expect another title shot, so I will retire from the ring."

Promoter: Niwat Laosuwanwat

(3-1-98)

*Joe Koizumi* ■

# Byrd

*(Continued from page 37)*

American Basketball League.

Tracy is widely recognized as one of the best female boxers in the world. Success came quickly for her, and after only six fights, Tracy, 34, became the first member of the Byrd family to become a world champion, winning the IFBA women's lightweight championship with a 10-round decision over Nora Daigle in August 1997.

She started boxing with her siblings when she was eight years old, sparring with her brother Ronnie, a flyweight, and sometimes Patrick and Chris, until they grew too big. She attended boxing tournaments with her brothers, who pointed out guys they felt she could beat. She was tempted to try boxing just to feel what her brothers felt, but had no amateur outlets as a teenager. When she was 16, her father threatened to enter Tracy in the Michigan Golden Gloves Tournament, against the objections of tournament officials. Her mother interceded, talking Joe out of it because it was not worth the hassle.

The Byrds have a genuine concern for boxers. In fact, the Byrd home could be renamed "Joe Byrd's Home For Wayward Boxers." When former WBC light heavyweight champion Montell Griffin was struggling to find a place to train for the '92 Olympics, the Byrds took him in.

"Everyone is a real joker, and they all like to have a good time," recalled Griffin. "They treated me real well, they opened their door and let me into their home without even knowing me. They're good people."

Now the entire family is waiting for Chris' chance at a world title. The Dungeon is long gone. Joe has converted the basement again, this time into a workout center for himself and his wife. Almost all of the kids are out of the house, except Chris' older sister Kay, and Laurie, when she's in Flint. Joe also has his own place, "Joe Byrd's Boxing Academy," where Chris, Tracy, and Patrick now train. It's a much bigger, more modern version of what the Byrds had in their basement while growing up. And the family continues to inspire one another when any of them step into the ring.

"Sometimes I don't even feel like boxing," said Chris. "Then you see a crowd of family there, and you just want to perform. Every single time, you hear certain family members out there yelling. But once you get in the ring, and that bell rings, everything else is blanked out. You're in a whole other world. I hear the voices a lot of times, but I'm tuned into what I have to do in the ring." ■

# Trinidad

*(Continued from page 39)*

down a few times, but he gets up and wins. But who knows him? You can't include him as a draw.

"With all the good promoting jobs Don King has done, and he's done plenty, he hasn't done a good job with this guy. He's got the perfect opponent in his own division in Oscar De La Hoya, who he should keep hounding for a fight. So what do they do? They say Felix wants to go up to 154 and if De La Hoya wants to fight he can come up in weight. Who writes this guy's stuff?

"King's only right about one thing. He can't put Trinidad on pay-per-view as the draw. You put Felix and [WBA welterweight champion Ike] Quartey together on pay-per-view, and you wouldn't break even. They're two talented guys and it would be a hell of a fight, but there'd be no money in it. That's a shame. It shouldn't be that way. Felix Trinidad should be a superstar."

At 33-0 with 29 knockouts and a dozen defenses of the 147-pound title he first won from Maurice Blocker on June 19, 1993, Trinidad is considered De La Hoya's most worthy challenger. Still, he could walk down any street in the United States and go unrecognized, while De La Hoya is mobbed nearly everywhere he goes. The majority of people in boxing blame King for this, claiming he has done little to advance Trinidad's career, instead, spending all his time servicing either Mike Tyson or the army of lawyers fighting the string of legal cases against him.

Although Trinidad has twice talked of leaving King, in the end he has always re-signed with him. It's a situation that will begin anew in July when his present contract expires, and Trinidad begins a new round of negotiations, not only with King but with a host of other promoters like Cedric Kushner, Dino Duva, Mike Acri, Bob Arum, and Dan Goossen of America Presents.

Down in Pensacola, Florida, attorney Fred Levin will watch those maneuverings with a jaundiced eye because he has been through it before with Trinidad. In 1995, the fighter and his father talked with Levin about leaving King, complaining that he was not making the money his skill and record should have commanded.

Armed with that information, Levin and Lou Duva's Main Events promotional company won a purse bid from King for a defense against then number-one contender Larry Barnes. Backed by HBO, they paid Trinidad $1-million, four times his normal payday at the time, to destroy Barnes on the same card on which Pernell Whitaker defeated Jake Rodriguez. The idea was that once Trinidad was free from King's contract, a fight with Whitaker could be made for millions more. It's a fight everyone, including Trinidad, is still waiting for.

"He contacted me and came to Pensacola two or three times," said Levin, who still serves as an adviser to Roy Jones. "He spent three or four weeks in my home. He told me he wanted to get out of his contract with King, so we filed suit and felt very comfortable we could get him out. A few weeks later, I got a call from his father and his interpreter. They were calling from Don's office, saying they wanted to drop the lawsuit. We did, and what's happened to Felix since?

"De La Hoya is out there making $2-million, $3-million, $4-million a fight. Felix is making $400,000, $500,000. Ike Quartey doesn't have near what Felix has going for him, and he's a more recognized star who makes twice as much money. It's hard to put a figure on how much he's lost, but it's been millions. With Tyson out of the picture, Felix is the biggest star in Don's stable, but for some reason he's been held back by his own promoter. It's like Don doesn't want Trinidad to become a superstar."

King, who is fighting a Federal indictment charging him with insurance fraud and a $100-million lawsuit from Tyson, had no time to comment on that. But others in boxing familiar both with King's opera-

tion and with Trinidad's situation agreed that something is amiss here that must soon be rectified if the fighter's time is not going to pass him by.

"His career has been completely misguided," said Acri, who once worked with King but now promotes fighters like Roberto Duran and Hector Camacho. "He hasn't been advanced and he never really gets paid. The guy has 12 title defenses and nobody knows him. They put him in New York, where there's more Puerto Ricans than they have in San Juan, and King had to buy 14,000 tickets himself or they would have had 1,500 people there. How can that be for a Puerto Rican fighter whose been world champion for nearly five years? Don's a great promoter, but he's the wrong guy for Trinidad. He's used him twice in 17 months, and he's the star of King's stable. How do you do that?

"Trinidad's with the wrong promoter, and the reason is just like Lloyd Price [the old rock and roll star] said about Don in the [HBO] movie [about King's life]: 'You've gotta be bigger than the fighter, Don.' Don is not going to let this kid get bigger than he is, even though he'd make more money, because he's afraid the kid will walk on him before the big payday."

Twice Trinidad and his father have threatened just that. Twice they have stayed with King. The word is that they're at it again, calling every major promoter and more than a few second-tier ones looking for offers. Yet the sport's insiders know Trinidad is also still talking with King about a new promotional deal. Only days before the Zulu fight, Trinidad said, "Don King has to get the big fights made for me. He has not been able to until now, but I have every expectation that this year the big fights will become a reality. I've had numerous conversations with King this year, and I believe they will happen."

Short of wishful thinking, why would Trinidad believe that? In 12 defenses, his biggest payday was the $1-million he got for Barnes, and that money came from promoters other than King. De La Hoya is promoted by King's arch-rival, Bob Arum, and has an ironclad contract with HBO that would preclude him fighting Trinidad on King's network of choice, cable rival Showtime. The situation is much the same with Quartey, who is also affiliated with the Duvas and HBO. Where this leaves Trinidad, one rival promoter suggests, is where he's been all along: on the outside of the big money and the big fights.

"Felix Trinidad is like a baseball that's been hit out of the park by Mark McGwire," Goossen said. "He's ready to bust his seams and show his core. He has more talent, pound-for-pound, than any fighter in the world today. But with the politics in boxing, he can't get the fights he needs to become a recognizable superstar. Who can get excited for a Zulu fight? He had a great crowd there in his hometown in Puerto Rico, but they would cheer him if he was fighting Butterbean. Who else was watching?"

Not even Don Chargin's pool man, apparently.

"If you want to see why Trinidad is not a superstar, look at his promoter," Goossen continued. "It's his job to make him a superstar. Has he? No, because he won't take a risk with his fighter and put him in with a rival promoter's fighter. And the other promoter [Arum] won't take a risk, either. Who loses? The fighters and the public."

Thus far, it seems, it has been Trinidad who has lost the most, especially when compared with the meteoric rise of his American-Hispanic rival, De La Hoya. While "The Golden Boy" is earning millions in purses and nearly as much in endorsement money, Trinidad awaits his second million-dollar payday without seeing it on the horizon, despite the presence of the kind of rivals who should be providing him the opportunity to become a legend.

At 25, Trinidad still has time. But if he returns to King again, will it finally lead to the fights he needs or merely to more nights like the one on April 3 when he bombed out Zulu, 17-3-1 (7), with several textbook perfect left hooks 2:20 into the fourth round? The packed house of 10,311 hometown fans at the Coliseo De Ruben Rodriguez in Bayamon were highly amused, but there were few other witnesses.

Yet despite his occasional dissatisfaction and King's inability to land the big fight for him, Trinidad seems to still believe the problems of his career exist in places other than within his own organization.

"I recognize that the fighters in my division don't want to fight me," Trinidad insisted. "The best welterweight in the world is Felix Trinidad. I don't think De La Hoya deserves that reputation. De La Hoya has only been in the division for one year and he hasn't faced me. When he does, he will lose.

"De La Hoya and Quartey have not wanted to fight me. I have shown I'm the best, and I will continue to demonstrate that I am the best and deserve the best opponents. The problem lies with De La Hoya and Bob Arum not wanting to fight me. I have proven I'm the pound-for-pound best fighter in the world. If I have to, I'll keep proving it every fight. I don't care who it is. I'm ready to fight, be it Oscar De La Hoya, Ike Quartey, or whoever comes along. The public knows what it wants to see."

Perhaps, but until they find a reason to watch him, Trinidad will remain a hidden superstar, a talented fighter all too few people know about. Will he ever find a way to change that?

"What's common sense to the average person isn't always translated to a fighter's way of thinking or a manager's way of thinking," Goossen lamented. "You'd think Felix would understand he hasn't attained the success he should have had, so he has to ask himself, 'Is it me?' Well, no, it's not. So what's holding him back? That's what Felix Trinidad has to figure out. If he doesn't do that soon, before you know it, it will have all passed him by." ■

***Ron Borges covers boxing for the Boston Globe and is a regular contributor to this magazine.***

## Lewis

*(Continued from page 42)*

Andrew Golota, which might have been the product of Lewis' physical and technical superiority. It also might have been a case of an overanxious Golota freezing in terror, a factor that tends to skew test results.

And now the book on Lewis includes the chapter on Briggs, which also suggests a certain amount of false data. Not only did the dreadlocked Briggs hang in longer with Lewis than he did with Wilson, but he noted in his postfight comments that he had been punched harder by Foreman. *Sheesh!* How can Lewis expect to gain widespread respect when even the guys he's just beaten up grade him on the curve?

"He's a good champion, man," Briggs, who was knocked down twice in the fourth round and once in the fifth, said of Lewis. "He's strong, fast, he's got power. He's got the whole package." Still, Briggs allowed, "Lennox didn't hit as hard as George. When George hit me, a couple of times I thought I saw God."

Let's see now. According to Briggs, Lewis doesn't strike with the force of a ponderous, 49-year-old relic who went the distance with Crawford Grimsley, who was knocked stiff in one round by Jimmy Thunder, who was taken apart by soft-punching Chris Byrd? That doesn't jibe with Steward's assertion that Lewis is, or is on the verge of becoming, a superhuman force of nature, sort of like the Incredible Hulk when he's really hissed off.

More six-degrees-of-separation stuff: Briggs was starched by Wilson, who was pounded by Terrence Lewis, who was flattened by James Gaines, who was decisioned by Larry Donald, who was cuffed around by Riddick Bowe. Float that one the next time a Lewis enthusiast brags that the big Englishman would have consumed "Big Daddy" as easily as he might an afternoon serving of tea and crumpets.

With Lewis, it's all about speculation and hypothesis. To look at him standing there—6'5" and 243 pounds of muscled splendor—is to imagine perfection inside the ring. But if a great-looking body were all that was required to win the heavyweight championship, Tim Witherspoon would have been blown away by another buff Brit, Frank Bruno, instead of the other way around. Rippling abs do not a terrific fighter make.

So is it quality of opposition that most determines one's place in boxing history? Holyfield's resume includes three dates with Bowe, two with Tyson, two with Dwight Muhammad Qawi, one apiece with Foreman and Buster Douglas. Lewis' most significant victims are Tommy Morrison, Golota, and Briggs, each of whom came stamped with a very large question mark. Whether bigger-name foes have, as Lewis so frequently claimed, ducked him because they're afraid is, of course, a matter of conjecture.

Twist it, squeeze it, examine it from every angle and the same conclusion inevitably must be drawn: Lewis *needs* to meet and defeat Holyfield to certify himself as a premier heavyweight, but Holyfield doesn't necessarily need Lewis to qualify for the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Of course, waltzing around with mandatory challengers Akinwande (WBA) and Bean (IBF) does nothing to enhance Holyfield's well-deserved reputation as the sport's ultimate warrior. Even pounding Tyson a third time for large stacks of greenbacks can't take Commander Vander to the place that a conquest of Lewis would.

Steward, a Hall of Fame trainer whose history of improving his fighters is indisputable, even if his description of their long-range abilities is not, said before the Briggs fight that Lewis had gone as far as Steward could take him under the circumstances.

"I think Lennox is up to 85 percent," said Steward, who once rhapsodized about the prospects of another of his heavyweights, Danell Nicholson, who never quite panned out. "The next 15 percent, I think, can only come from actual fights. I don't think he can learn much more in training."

From a purely technical standpoint, Lewis, 33-1 (27), appeared in spots to be dramatically improved over the flawed version inherited by Steward. Rocked twice by Briggs, 30-2 (24), in the first round, Lewis settled down and made good use of his now-state-of-the-art jab to set up his power shots, which are more varied and better disguised than was the case with the pre-Steward model. Let the record show that Lewis landed 125 of 213 punches attempted against Briggs, a solid 59 percent, and an even more impressive 64 percent (72 of 112) of his power blows. The punch statistics furnished by CompuBox sometimes are open to interpretation, but the figures compiled by Lewis against Briggs almost always are going to equate to success. Lewis also throws more uppercuts and hooks these days, weapons he rarely employed in the old days when he was right-hand crazy.

Negatives? Well, a few. Being wobbled twice by Briggs lends credence to the idea, first floated when he was starched in his first fight with McCall, that Lewis has a chin made of something less sturdy than granite. What if Briggs had hurt Lewis with, say, 2½ minutes remaining in the opening round instead of 30 seconds? And what if the guy dishing out the punishment had been Holyfield, an accomplished finisher if not an unduly devastating puncher? Would Lewis have checked out as swiftly as had Golota in his Waterloo showdown with Double L?

There also is the little matter of Lewis' ability to heed directions. Yes, his rough edges have been smoothed through his work in the gym with Steward, but his decision to immediately charge at Briggs was all his own, and it nearly cost him.

"In the first round, Lennox came out a little too excited," Steward said. "He was all worked up. It had gotten personal between the two of them. He got hit with a punch—it wasn't a hard punch, but he wasn't expecting to get hit. His mind was strictly on being aggressive."

Translation: Lewis was thrown off Steward's carefully constructed fight plan by a mouthy Briggs, who had derided the British champion as a "snotty-nosed Englishman" in the days leading up to the fight. Makes you wonder what would have happened if he was fighting Holyfield, who doesn't usually engage in trash-talking but is familiar with the playing of mind games and how to win at them. Holyfield, in fact, targeted Lewis for some of his best-ever zingers at a press conference to announce his June 6 title bout with Akinwande, whose only hope is to go down as gallantly as did Briggs.

"Lennox got surprised," Holyfield said in assessing Lewis' reaction to the resistance put up by Briggs. "I felt the most important thing he did was to win the fight. You can't take that from him. It shows that, regardless of who you fight, if they jump out and fight you with the little bit that they have, it'll be a tough fight until you get it under control."

Warming to the subject at hand, Holyfield also noted that "I have never ducked anybody. Of all the fighters, I wouldn't duck Lennox. Lennox is one of the guys that just fits my style, just like Mike Tyson fit my style. Anytime a guy fights like Lennox Lewis, with his head straight up, that's a good style for me."

So why isn't a Holyfield-Lewis fight, the only heavyweight matchup that can presently be made (while Tyson remains under indefinite suspension) that anyone cares about, being made? Why must fans be obliged to imagine the outcome of a

collision between the proverbial immovable force (Holyfield) vs. the irresistible object (Lewis)?

"I had to swallow my pride to get the opportunity to fight Mike Tyson," Holyfield said. "If Lennox really thinks he can beat me and he wanted the fight, he'd fight me for $5-million. He knows he isn't ready. He doesn't feel that he can win.

"Why should I take less money just to fight Lennox Lewis? I'm the guy who's proven himself. I worked hard to get to this level, now you tell me I should come down two levels just to prove myself? I got to raise [Lewis] up to the level where I'm at. He ain't hurt nobody. He built his reputation by beating people who didn't have reputations. Has Lennox ever beat a champion? Who did Lennox beat to win the championship? He beat Razor Ruddock. Razor Ruddock got his reputation by losing twice to Tyson."

Holyfield also took a more veiled swipe at Lewis when he said that Bowe, who won two of the three fights in their celebrated trilogy, is better than anyone he had fought or likely ever will fight. Bowe—now fat and unhappily retired—frequently has been characterized by Lewis and his supporters as a frightened, overrated stiff who did everything to avoid Lewis except to enter the witness protection program.

"Riddick Bowe can hurt you coming forward, he can hurt you going back," Holyfield said. "Just a very gifted, talented guy. With Bowe, I always had to be gauging my distance."

The distance between Lewis and Holyfield, alas, is a yawning chasm that many suspect will never be bridged. The would-be combatants hurling insults from either side seems to be a useless exercise, at best, and extremely damaging to boxing, at worst. Too often the most widely anticipated matchups are debated with words instead of settled with gloved fists.

"I'm a very patient man," Lewis said a few days before he did battle with Briggs. "I'm not frustrated. I just take things as they come. All Evander Holyfield and some of the other heavyweights have proven is that they're afraid of me. Making me wait only allowed me to get better, to improve upon my skills. It made me more of a consummate professional. They missed out by not taking me earlier. They took the wrong gamble. Holyfield is there for the taking."

Decide for yourself if that portion of Lennox Lewis that was on display against Briggs is most of what he can be, or even if that matters. It's the part we aren't seeing, the Holyfield variable, that counts. ■

***Bernard Fernandez covers boxing for the Philadelphia Daily News and is a regular contributor to this magazine.***

## New Faces

*(Continued from page 16)*

go by without someone reminding him of his parents' plight. His mother, Brenda, bought Bowman a pair of boxing gloves when he was a kid so that he could release some of his pent-up frustration. He and his younger brother, Mike, used to share the gloves. One would wear the right glove, the other the left, and the two would pound away on a heavybag for half-an-hour at a time. Brenda told her sons never to back down. At times, she even set an example herself.

"I remember a time a guy snatched my mother's purse on a bus," Bowman said. "She caught him with a right hook and knocked him down."

His unsettling childhood is still very much a part of who Bowman is today.

"I cried a lot as a kid when people used to tease me," he recalled. "My mom would tell me not worry about it, but I was in a lot of fights. It wasn't like my mother was handicapped, people just didn't understand. That frustrated me. I had a bad temper, so I don't know what I would do without boxing.

"Fighting was like learning how to walk, once you do it, you never forget how. My mother would tell me, 'If you don't fight back, *I'm* going to beat you.' Right now, it's like she's fighting through me. She loves the fights. If she was younger, she would box today."

Bowman was an underdog against Sosa, but that's the way he's lived almost his entire life. There was a 90 percent chance that Bowman would be deaf when he was born. He was a twin (his sister was stillborn), raised by his mother in a drug-infested area of Chicago full of troublemakers and gangbangers. Bowman was sucked into the streets for a short while, then managed to escape.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He did not fight from 1993 to '97, because of a contract dispute with his former manager, Bob O'Donnell. Then he reached an agreement with Jimmy Adams, who is based in Nashville, Tennessee. During his layoff, Bowman tried to find himself as a person, while still maintaining his boxing skills. He worked briefly with the hearing impaired, and is not ashamed to admit he relied heavily on his wife, Tara, to get him through the difficult period. The whole ordeal took a chunk out of Bowman's pride, but it also made him realize all the good things he had going for him.

"There were a lot of times I wanted to walk away," Bowman said. "Things weren't going too well, bills were getting backed up. But fighting was always in my heart. I'm thankful my wife is a professional nurse. I'm a very proud man who had to pull my weight. Tara did more than her share. I wanted to be the provider, I wanted to be the man. She's taken care of me for five years of our relationship. I have done a lot of wrong to her, she should have left me a long time ago, but she stuck with me. She's here for me. I realized I had a special situation."

An important key for Bowman is patience. Former WBA heavyweight champion Greg Page, one of his trainers, has seen the transformation Bowman has made from a slugger to someone who still hits with authority but uses his speed more and evades punches. The fighter has done well in pressure situations, especially a very tough spot in the fourth round of the Sosa fight. Bowman had won the first three rounds, but by the fourth it appeared as if he'd punched himself out. Bowman was trapped against the ropes, absorbing punishment, when he decided to take a knee, which led to an eight-count from referee Jerry McKenzie. Not badly hurt, Bowman rose easily and fired back at Sosa, nailing him with a solid combination along the ropes to close the round.

"I told him, 'If you get to the point where you're hurt, let them take the point and take a knee,'" Page said. "When Ken went down, he came right back up, and nodded his head. I told him it was a very smart move."

Bowman was optimistic and upbeat before the Sosa fight, and has been brimming over with confidence since. He suggested several options for big fights, such as former WBC champ Montell Griffin or possibly reigning WBA titlist Lou Del Valle. Based on his showing against Sosa, most experts agree such challenges aren't out of reach.

"Bowman showed patience," said USA boxing analyst Sean O'Grady. "He showed more composure than a lot of the kids from the Midwest. He was impressive. Bowman surprised me. He was going to the body well and seemed to have more savvy against someone like Sosa. I don't think he could have a more perfect opponent than Sosa, who brings the action to you. And Ken Bowman capitalized."

There's only one person right now who can stop Bowman, Page said, and that's Bowman. It could happen if he doesn't train well enough, or if he loses his cool outside the ring. There's a mindless rage that sometimes takes a hold of the fighter, a kill-or-be-killed attitude that has gotten him into some difficulty outside of the ring. About a week prior to the Sosa fight, Bowman had a run-in with a Chicago police officer after being stopped for a traffic violation.

The tug-of-war battle with his temper has been much tougher than anything that has happened to him inside a boxing ring. Bowman sought counseling and attended anger management classes, and he knows how deep the rage lies; it's always been a part of him.

"I've learned to control it," insisted Bowman. "I just don't like it when people try stepping on other people. I've seen it too often. I've lived through it. I try to keep in mind that I fight for my mom. I can't let her down. It is because of her that I am where I am today." ■

## Deserve

*(Continued from page 25)*

But we all know that's not the way it's going to be. Nobody wants to blow Holyfield-Tyson III, so Iron Mike's comeback fights will probably come against pretenders like Brian Nielsen and Larry Donald, and then it'll be on to Holyfield. Meanwhile, the superstars of tomorrow who *should* be getting the push, guys like Michael Grant and Chris Byrd, will continue to wait in line.

*(Continued on page 63)*


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# Deserve

*(Continued from page 61)*

## Zeljko Mavrovic

It was all WBC champ Lewis could do not to laugh when Mohawked Croatian Mavrovic tried to portray himself as a legitimate threat to take the title when they meet in England this summer. The Brit had just disposed of Shannon Briggs in a surprisingly exciting five-round struggle, and at the postfight press conference, Mavrovic used Briggs as an example of how an apparent mismatch is not a guaranteed win. Lewis just stared straight ahead and tried his darndest to keep a straight face.

Mavrovic is the mandatory challenger for a title fight that Lewis knows nobody wants to see. The rugged-looking 220-pounder boasts an impressive record of 27-0 (22), but a close look down the list of his opponents reveals, well, a bunch of European fighters you've never heard of. He kayoed the decidedly unspectacular Christophe Bizot for the European heavyweight title in 1995, then was taken the 12-round distance in the rematch. Early in Mavrovic's career, he was taken the eight-round distance by oft-beaten Americans Kimmuel Odum and Marion Wilson. He's never faced a Lennox Lewis, and if there were any justice, he never would face a Lennox Lewis.

## Vaughn Bean

If it weren't for Butterbean, Vaughn Bean would be the most overhyped Bean in boxing. With only one noteworthy win on his record, a third-round knockout of Maurice Harris in 1994, Bean, then the number-five contender to the IBF title, got a shot at champion Michael Moorer in March of '97. At the end of 12 dreadfully boring rounds, Moorer was declared the winner, and most boxing fans assumed (and hoped) that would be the last they would see of Chicago-native Bean. But when the new IBF ratings came out, guess who had jumped from number five to number one.

So at press time, Bean, 30-1 (24), was the IBF counterpart to Akinwande, a mandatory challenger Holyfield must take care of eventually in order to avoid losing the belt. Bean possesses the dangerous (to himself) combination of being neither a big puncher nor a slick mover, though his composure and patience are strong assets. Still, if Holyfield-Akinwande and Holyfield-Bean *both* come before Holyfield-Lewis, plenty of people will have a good excuse to stop being boxing fans.

## Vincent Pettway

Three years ago, Pettway was the IBF junior middleweight champion, and his successful defense in April '95 against Simon Brown, which ended with a chilling knockout, made him a star. But it's been all downhill since then for the exciting fighter from Baltimore. Leading on the cards, he was knocked out in the 12th round by Paul Vaden, and lost the IBF title. In Pettway's next fight, in February '96, he challenged Terry Norris and was kayoed in the eighth round of a one-sided affair. He fought twice more in '96, and just once in '97, scoring three wins against opposition with a combined record of 44-52-6.

And yet, by some stroke of madness, Pettway, 41-6-1 (32), is the number-one contender to the IBF welterweight title held by Felix Trinidad. Even three years ago, when Pettway was at his peak, it was universally acknowledged that he had a fragile chin. Now, at the age of 32, can you imagine what would happen if that chin runs into Trinidad's left hook? Fortunately, Trinidad made the IBF happy for the time being by taking on number-two contender Zulu, so he might not be pressed into fighting Pettway. But just seeing Pettway's name at the top of that list is disturbing.

## Floyd Mayweather Jr.

In one sense, '96 Olympian Mayweather is worthy of a title shot. At 21, and sporting a record of 16-0 (13) as we went to press, Mayweather has exhibited all the tools to be a superstar. "Pretty Boy Floyd" has lightning-fast hands, great athleticism and mobility, and confidence to spare. So while his calling out WBC super featherweight champ Genaro Hernandez seemed premature to some, the truth is that it's conceivable that Mayweather could defeat "Chicanito" already. But does he *deserve* the chance? Hardly.

The upstart from Grand Rapids, Michigan, hasn't beaten any true contenders yet to warrant his ranking of 12th by the WBC. He's knocked out some decent fighters in Luis Leija and Hector Arroyo, but no opponents who are themselves in position for a title shot. The WBC super featherweight rankings are unusual in that the number-one contender to Hernandez is—get this—a deserving, talented young fighter, Mexican Jesus Chavez. If Mayweather could secure a fight with Chavez, or an ex-champ like Tracy Patterson or Gabe Ruelas, a win would legitimately put him in line for a shot at the title. But as it stands, the Hernandez-Mayweather fight that seems destined to come off by year's end is unfair to the other contenders who have paid their dues. Mayweather may be ready, but he's not deserving. ■

# 10 Records

*(Continued from page 47)*

George Foreman, and not Mike Tyson. The fact that he was an outspoken and politically minded athlete who happened to compete during an especially turbulent time in America's history served to push him to the forefront of social discussion, which was a first for any prize fighter. And, yes, he could fight. From Liston, to Frazier, to Norton, to Foreman, Ali met them all during the most fertile period in heavyweight history, and he beat them all, providing more memorable moments over the course of his career than we could have possibly hoped for. There have been fighters as bombastic as Ali, as skilled as Ali, maybe even as colorful as Ali. But there will never be another Ali. His record is secure.

**Most Rematches: 19 (Ted "Kid" Lewis & Jack Britton)**

Struggle to recall the number of meaningful series that have taken place over the last 10 or 15 years, and you'll recognize how improbable it is that any two fighters will ever come close to this record. Riddick Bowe-Evander Holyfield is one. Michael Carbajal-Humberto Gonzalez is another. You can even throw in the Sugar Ray Leonard-Roberto Duran, Greg Haugen-Vinny Pazienza, and Tony Lopez-John-John Molina trilogies and see that the occurrence is rare. Also, note that the magic number is three. The unwritten rule in modern-day boxing is that if the first

*(Continued on page 64)*

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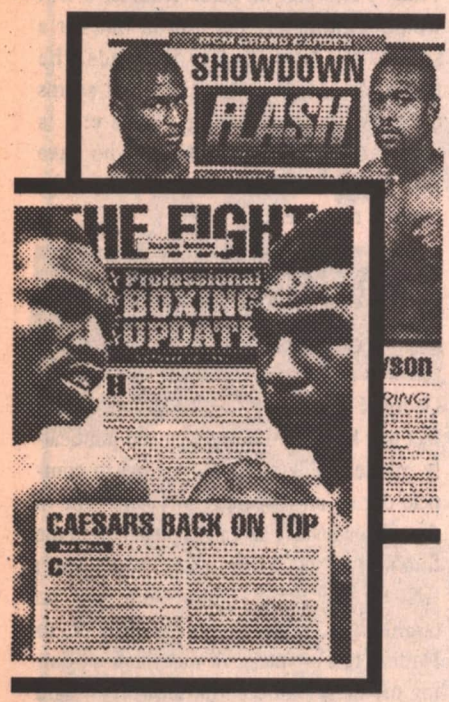


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# 10 Records

*(Continued from page 63)*

fight is great, you can have another, but if the same guy wins, the series ends there. If there's a split, a tie-breaker can follow, and that's as far as it goes.

But even back in the '30s and '40s Beau Jack and Ike Williams made a career fighting one another, and Archie Moore had multiple bouts with just about every light heavyweight of note over three decades. Series were common during that era and still, no pair came close to fighting 20 times, as Lewis and Britton did between 1915 and 1921. (For the record, Britton won four of their battles, Lewis three, they drew once, and fought to 12 no-decisions.) Additionally, the economics of today's game, as well as the comparatively short careers of contemporary fighters, assures this record's place in the history books.

**Most Knockouts: 141 (Archie Moore)**

There are any number of reasons to believe that for as long as there is boxing, Moore will stand as the all-time knockout leader. First, he engaged in 234 bouts over four decades. Almost on the basis of longevity alone, he qualified for Hall of Fame inclusion the moment he retired in 1963. Boxers simply don't fight that long anymore, or as frequently as Moore did. In an average year, he'd do battle eight or nine times. In 1936, his most active year, he fought 22 times. That's not all there is to it, though. There have been other fighters who fought even more frequently and for almost as long who didn't come close to his knockout total (Willie Pep, for example, ended his career with 242 bouts but only 65 kayos). Moore was an outstanding technician who carried dynamite in his fists. Among his knockout victims were Harold Johnson, Holman Williams, Bobo Olson, and Jimmy Bivins. If you need further proof that Moore's record will never be touched, consider that in the history of the game, only eight fighters have scored kayos in triple digits: Moore, Young Stribling (126), Billy Bird (125), George Odwell (114), Sugar Ray Robinson (110), Sandy Saddler (103), Sam Langford (102), and Henry Armstrong (100). No fighter from the last 40 years has broken 100. Enough said.

**Most fights: 463 (Len Wickwar)**

Take a look at the records of most of today's top-10 fighters and you'll see pretty quickly why this record will never be approached, much less broken. The great majority have fewer than 50 fights. Some notable exceptions are Julio Cesar Chavez (103 bouts), George Foreman (81), Yory Boy Campas (72), Tracy Patterson (66), and Julio Cesar Vasquez (62). After that, a fighter is considered a damned solid veteran if he's amassed 40 fights. The incomparable Wickwar, who for all his persistence was never a champion or even a top contender, fought for 19 years between 1928 and 1947, an average of 24 bouts a year. Even modern-day, ultra-busy journeymen like Buck Smith and Marty Jakubowski could never dream of keeping up such a pace over nearly two decades. Moreover, the careers of Wickwar's closest competitors ended more than half a century ago. Jack Britton (350 bouts), Johnny Dundee (333), Billy Bird (318), and George Mardsen (311) all fought between 1905 and 1946. Wickwar may not be in the Hall of Fame, but his record is as insurmountable as Joe Louis' 25 title defenses or Archie Moore's 141 knockouts. ■


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HAMED/ROBINSON or HAMED/MEDINA.....$35.ea.
HEARNS/BARKLEY or HEARNS/BARKLEY II..$25. ea.
HEARNS/CUEVAS or DURAN/HEARNS.....$125. ea.
HEARNS/HILL or HEARNS/ROLDAN.....$20. ea.
MANCINI/CHACON or PAZIENZA/BURGESE..$20. ea.
HOLMES/FRAZIER or HOLMES/MERCER...$25. ea.
HOLYFIELD/BOWE or HOLYFIELD/BOWE II....$45. ea.
HOLYFIELD/TYSON II or HOLYFIELD/BOWE III..$35. ea.
HOLYFIELD/COOPER or HOLYFIELD/DOKES...$35. ea.
HOLYFIELD/DOUGLAS or MANCINI/KIM.....$90. ea.
HOLYFIELD/MOORER or HOLYFIELD/HOLMES..$35. ea.
HOLYFIELD/MOORER II or LEWIS/MCCALL....$25.ea.
HOLYFIELD/FOREMAN or HOLYFIELD/QAWI...$50. ea.
LEONARD/CAMACHO or LEWIS/GOLOTA.....$20. ea.
LEONARD/DURAN II.....$50.
LEONARD/DURAN.....$125.
LEONARD/HEARNS or LEONARD/HEARNS II..$65. ea.
JONES/PAZIENZA or GATTI/RODRIGUEZ.....$35. ea.
MANCINI/CAMACHO or MANCINI/HAUGEN...$20. ea.
TYSON/WILLIAMS or McGUIGAN/PEDROSA..$50. ea.
MERCER/MORRISON or TYSON/SELDON....$40. ea.
MORRISON/LEWIS or TYSON/BRUNO II.....$35. ea.
NORRIS/LEONARD or LEONARD/LALONDE...$60. ea.
PAZIENZA/DURAN or DURAN/SIMS.....$25. ea.
PAZIENZA/DURAN II or PAZIENZA/ROSENBLATT..$20. ea.
TYSON/BRUNO or TYSON/HOLMES.....$100. ea.
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LEONARD/DURAN III • LEONARD/NORRIS
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# WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were compiled as of February 1998, the WBC as of March 1998, and the IBF as of April 1998.

| HEAVYWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Lennox Lewis (GB)** | C | – | – |
| **Evander Holyfield (USA)** | – | C | C |
| Zeljko Mavrovic (CROA) | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| Ray Mercer (USA) | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| John Ruiz (USA) | 3 | 5 | – |
| Oliver McCall (USA) | 4 | – | – |
| David Tua (NZ) | 5 | – | – |
| Larry Donald (USA) | 6 | – | 12 |
| Buster Douglas (USA) | 7 | – | – |
| Jerry Ballard (USA) | 8 | 12 | 10 |
| Shannon Briggs (USA) | 9 | – | – |
| Wladimir Klitchko (UKR) | 10 | – | – |
| Henry Akinwande (GB) | – | 1 | 5 |
| Jade Scott (USA) | 17 | 4 | – |
| Michael Moorer (USA) | 19 | 6 | 6 |
| Kirk Johnson (CAN) | – | 7 | – |
| Orlin Norris (USA) | – | 8 | – |
| Michael Grant (USA) | 22 | 9 | – |
| Francois Botha (SA) | 15 | 10 | 2 |
| Vaughn Bean (USA) | – | – | 1 |
| Hasim Rahman (USA) | 27 | – | 3 |
| Obed Sullivan (USA) | – | – | 8 |
| Chris Byrd (USA) | 20 | – | 9 |

| CRUISERWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)** | C | – | – |
| **Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)** | – | C | – |
| **Imamu Mayfield (USA)** | – | – | C |
| Johnny Nelson (GB) | 1 | – | – |
| Nate Miller (USA) | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| Jacob Mofokeng (SA) | 3 | 10 | 3 |
| Alexei Ilin (RUS) | 4 | – | – |
| Marcelo Dominguez (ARG) | 5 | – | 11 |
| Yosukezan Nishijima (JAP) | 6 | – | – |
| Dale Brown (CAN) | 7 | – | – |
| Arthur Williams (USA) | 8 | 4 | 1 |
| Darren Corbett (IRE) | 9 | 7 | 10 |
| Eliecer Castillo (CUBA) | 10 | – | – |
| Ezequiel Paixao (BRA) | – | 1 | – |
| Terry Dunstan (GB) | – | 3 | – |
| Tiwon Taylor (USA) | 29 | 5 | 7 |
| Ken Murphy (USA) | 15 | 6 | 4 |
| Stefan Anghem (SWI) | 18 | 8 | 12 |
| Adolpho Washington (USA) | – | 9 | 9 |
| Vacant | – | – | 2 |
| Faustino Gonzalez (COL) | – | – | 5 |
| Uriah Grant (USA) | – | – | 8 |

| LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Roy Jones (USA)** | C | – | – |
| **Lou Del Valle (USA)** | – | C | – |
| **Reggie Johnson (USA)** | – | – | C |
| Michael Nunn (USA) | 1 | 9 | – |
| Graciano Rocchigiani (GER) | 2 | – | – |
| Richard Frazier (USA) | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| Montell Griffin (USA) | 4 | – | – |
| Muhammad Siluvangi (ZAI) | 5 | 3 | 12 |
| Jorge Castro (ARG) | 6 | – | – |
| Ole Klemetsen (NOR) | 7 | 7 | 5 |
| Ken Bowman (USA) | 8 | 11 | 8 |
| Fabian Chancelay (ARG) | 9 | 12 | – |
| Lincoln Carter (USA) | 10 | – | – |
| Virgil Hill (USA) | – | 1 | – |
| Dario Matteoni (ARG) | 18 | 2 | – |
| Richard Hall (USA) | 27 | 5 | 4 |
| Merqui Sosa (DR) | 14 | 6 | – |
| Anthony Bigeni (AUS) | – | 8 | – |
| Eddy Smulders (HOLL) | – | 10 | – |
| Vacant | – | – | 1 |
| Vacant | – | – | 2 |
| Will Taylor (USA) | 26 | – | 3 |
| Mark Prince (GB) | – | – | 7 |
| Yosukezan Nishijima (JAP) | – | – | 9 |
| David Telesco (USA) | – | – | 10 |

| SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Thulane Malinga (SA)** | C | – | – |
| **Frank Liles (USA)** | – | C | – |
| **Charles Brewer (USA)** | – | – | C |
| Vincenzo Nardiello (ITA) | 1 | – | – |
| Robin Reid (GB) | 2 | – | – |
| Dean Francis (GB) | 3 | – | – |
| Thomas Tate (USA) | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| Roberto Duran (PAN) | 5 | – | – |
| Eric Lucas (CAN) | 6 | 8 | – |
| Richie Woodhall (GB) | 7 | – | – |
| Mads Larsen (DEN) | 8 | – | – |
| Antoine Byrd (USA) | 9 | 7 | 1 |
| Mauricio Amaral (BRA) | 10 | 5 | 3 |
| Andrei Shkalikov (RUS) | – | 1 | – |
| Herol Graham (GB) | – | 2 | – |
| Bruno Girard (FRA) | 19 | 3 | – |
| Dean Francis (GB) | – | 4 | 12 |
| Jorge Castro (ARG) | – | 9 | – |
| Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO) | – | 10 | 6 |
| Vacant | – | – | 2 |
| Joseph Kiwanuka (UGA) | 13 | – | 5 |
| Reginaldo Andrade (BRA) | 16 | – | 7 |
| Byron Mitchell (USA) | 26 | 11 | 8 |
| Rick Thornberry (AUST) | – | – | 9 |
| Robert Coehlo (BRA) | 17 | – | 10 |

| MIDDLEWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Keith Holmes (USA)** | C | – | – |
| **William Joppy (USA)** | 11 | C | – |
| **Bernard Hopkins (USA)** | – | – | C |
| Hassine Cherifi (FRA) | 1 | – | – |
| Robert McCracken (GB) | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Stephane Ouelette (CAN) | 3 | 12 | – |
| Julio Cesar Vazquez (ARG) | 4 | – | – |
| Kevin Palmer (USA) | 5 | – | – |
| Robert Allen (USA) | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| Antwun Echols (USA) | 7 | 7 | 2 |
| Alex Zaitzev (RUS) | 8 | – | – |
| Paul Vaden (USA) | 9 | 11 | – |
| Agostino Cardamone (ITA) | 10 | – | – |
| Darren Obah (AUSTRL) | – | 1 | – |
| Peter Venancio (BRA) | – | 3 | 9 |
| Julio Cesar Green (DR) | – | 4 | 7 |
| Anthony Andrews (GUY) | 18 | 6 | – |
| Abdula Ramadan (CAN) | – | 8 | 4 |
| Roberto Duran (PAN) | – | 9 | – |
| Giovanni Pretorius (SA) | – | 10 | 5 |
| Dan Trevino (USA) | – | – | 6 |
| Urbano Gurrola (MEX) | – | – | 8 |
| Rogerio Cacciatore (BRA) | 21 | – | 10 |

| JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Keith Mullings (USA)** | C | – | – |
| **Laurent Boudouani (FRA)** | – | C | – |
| **Yori Boy Campas (MEX)** | – | – | C |
| Ahmed Dottuev (BALK) | 1 | 10 | 10 |
| Davide Ciarlante (ITA) | 2 | 2 | – |
| Terry Norris (USA) | 3 | – | 12 |
| Tony Marshall (USA) | 4 | 4 | – |
| Robert West (USA) | 5 | – | – |
| Kookyui Song (KOR) | 6 | – | – |
| Said Bennajem (FRA) | 7 | – | – |
| Nick Rupa (USA) | 8 | – | – |
| Oba Carr (USA) | 9 | – | – |
| Anthony Jones (USA) | 10 | – | – |
| Guillermo Jones (PAN) | – | 1 | – |
| Kevin Kelly (USA) | 20 | 3 | – |
| Tony Menefee (USA) | – | 5 | – |
| Pedro Ortega (MEX) | 27 | 6 | – |
| Jason Papillion (USA) | 19 | 7 | 3 |
| Andrew Murray (GUY) | – | 8 | 5 |
| Mamadou Thiam (FRA) | 18 | 9 | – |
| Vacant | – | – | 1 |
| Vacant | – | – | 2 |
| Aaron Davis (USA) | – | – | 4 |
| Earnie Artango (AUSTRL) | 14 | – | 6 |
| Raul Marquez (USA) | 13 | 12 | 7 |
| Sergio Luciano (BRA) | – | – | 8 |
| Fernando Vargas (USA) | – | – | 9 |

| WELTERWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Oscar De La Hoya (USA)** | C | – | – |
| **Ike Quartey (GHA)** | – | C | – |
| **Felix Trinidad (PR)** | – | – | C |
| Patrick Charpentier (FRA) | 1 | 8 | 7 |
| Derrell Coley (USA) | 2 | 6 | 5 |
| Andrei Pestryaev (RUS) | 3 | – | – |
| James Page (USA) | 4 | – | – |
| Ariel Chaves (ARG) | 5 | – | – |
| Wilfredo Rivera (PR) | 6 | – | – |
| Nicolas Cervera (COL) | 7 | – | – |
| Maxim Nesterenko (RUS) | 8 | – | – |
| Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL) | 9 | 10 | 12 |
| Suk Hyun Yun (KOR) | 10 | – | – |
| Vacant | – | 1 | – |
| Andrei Pestraiev (RUS) | – | 2 | – |
| Jose Luis Lopez (MEX) | – | 3 | – |
| Oba Carr (USA) | – | 4 | 11 |
| Juan Negron (PR) | 27 | 5 | – |
| Jeff Malcolm (AUSTRL) | – | 7 | – |
| Michele Piccirillo (ITA) | 11 | 9 | – |
| Vincent Pettway (USA) | – | – | 1 |
| Hugo Pineda (COL) | – | – | 2 |
| Raul Frank (USA) | – | – | 3 |
| Vernon Forrest (USA) | 12 | – | 4 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mahenge Zulu (ZAI) | – | – | 6 |
| Juan Negron (PR) | – | – | 8 |
| Walter Saporiti (ARG) | – | – | 9 |
| Adrian Stone (GB) | – | – | 10 |

| JR. WELTERWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vacant | C | – | 1 |
| **Khalid Rahilou (FRA)** | – | C | – |
| **Vince Phillips (USA)** | – | – | C |
| Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX) | 1 | 3 | – |
| Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX) | 2 | 4 | – |
| Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL) | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| Rafael Ruelas (MEX) | 4 | – | – |
| Reggie Green (USA) | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| Diobelis Hurtado (CUB) | 6 | – | – |
| Soren Sondergaard (DEN) | 7 | – | – |
| Jong Hoon Yuh (KOR) | 8 | – | – |
| Sharmba Mitchell (USA) | 9 | 1 | 2 |
| Ricardo Silva (ARG) | 10 | – | – |
| Virgil McClendon (USA) | 30 | 5 | 3 |
| Freddy Rojas (CHILE) | 22 | 6 | 4 |
| Elio Ortiz (VEN) | – | 8 | – |
| Guillermo Mosquera (COL) | – | 9 | – |
| Hisao Arai (JPN) | – | 10 | – |
| Terron Millett (USA) | – | – | 5 |
| Jan Bergman (SA) | 12 | 11 | 7 |
| Rafael Ruelas (USA) | – | – | 9 |
| Alex Carillo (COL) | – | – | 10 |

| LIGHTWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Steve Johnston (USA)** | C | – | – |
| **Orzubek Nazarov (JAP)** | – | C | – |
| **Shane Mosley (USA)** | – | – | C |
| Cesar Bazan (MEX) | 1 | – | – |
| Arturo Gatti (USA) | 2 | – | 7 |
| Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP) | 3 | – | – |
| Daomai Sithkodam (THAI) | 4 | – | – |
| Jong Kwon Baek (KOR) | 5 | – | – |
| Billy Schwer (GB) | 6 | 3 | 12 |
| David Dodi Tetteh (GHA) | 7 | – | 11 |
| Eduardo Morales (ARG) | 8 | 2 | 1 |
| Israel Cardona (USA) | 9 | 6 | 2 |
| Rick Yoshimura (JAP) | 10 | 9 | – |
| Alberto Sicurella (ARG) | – | 1 | – |
| Ceppy Holman (INDO) | – | 4 | – |
| Fred Ladd (USA) | – | 5 | 6 |
| Colin Dunne (GB) | 27 | 7 | – |
| Phillip Holiday (SA) | – | 8 | 5 |
| Leavander Johnson (USA) | – | 10 | 4 |
| Justin Rowsell (AUSTRL) | – | – | 3 |
| Demetrius Ceballos (USA) | – | – | 8 |
| John-John Molina (PR) | 17 | – | 9 |
| Dario Esais (COL) | – | – | 10 |

| JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Genaro Hernandez (USA)** | C | – | – |
| **Yong Soo Choi (KOR)** | – | C | – |
| **Robert Garcia (USA)** | – | 7 | C |
| Jesus Chavez (USA) | 1 | – | – |
| Santos Rebolledo (VEN) | 2 | 5 | 9 |
| Anatoly Alexandrov (RUS) | 3 | 4 | – |
| Tracy Patterson (USA) | 4 | – | 8 |
| Justin Juuko (UGA) | 5 | 6 | – |
| Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI) | 6 | – | – |
| Goyo Vargas (MEX) | 7 | – | – |
| Djamel Lifa (FRA) | 8 | 8 | – |
| Carlos Gerena (PR) | 9 | – | – |
| Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV) | 10 | – | – |
| Gilbert Serrano (VEN) | – | 1 | – |
| Lakva Sim (MON) | – | 2 | – |
| Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP) | – | 3 | – |
| Harold Warren (USA) | 19 | 9 | 7 |
| Edson Xuxa Nacimento (BRA) | – | 10 | – |
| Vacant | – | – | 1 |
| Vacant | – | – | 2 |
| Jaime Rangel (COL) | – | – | 3 |
| Ramon Ledon (CUBA) | – | – | 4 |
| Joel Casamayor (CUB) | 18 | – | 5 |
| Arnulfo Castillo (USA) | – | – | 6 |
| Tautoma Yasuda (JAP) | – | – | 10 |

| FEATHERWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Luisito Espinosa (PHIL)** | C | – | – |
| **Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)** | – | C | – |
| **Hector Lizarraga (USA)** | – | – | C |
| Cesar Soto (MEX) | 1 | – | – |
| Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX) | 2 | – | – |
| Paul Ingle (GB) | 3 | – | – |
| Manuel Medina (MEX) | 4 | – | 11 |
| Carlos Rios (ARG) | 5 | 10 | – |
| Pablo Chacon (ARG) | 6 | 12 | – |
| Dramane Nabaloun (BKF) | 7 | – | 10 |
| Billy Hardy (GB) | 8 | 9 | – |
| Takeo Imaoka (JAP) | 9 | – | – |
| Fred Norwood (USA) | 10 | 2 | – |
| Antonio Cermeno (VEN) | – | 1 | – |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Genaro Rios (NIC) | – | 3 | – |
| Carlos Gerena (PR) | – | 4 | 5 |
| Frederic Perez (FRA) | – | 5 | – |
| Angel Vasquez (PR) | 24 | 6 | 2 |
| Victor Polo (COL) | – | 7 | 1 |
| Chamopekt Chorchamuang (THAI) | – | 8 | – |
| Mbulelo Botile (SA) | – | 11 | 3 |
| David Santos (USA) | 27 | – | 4 |
| Jesus Chavez (USA) | – | – | 6 |
| Edward Barrios (COL) | 17 | – | 7 |
| Tony Wehbee (AUS) | 22 | – | 8 |
| Teofilo Carranza (PER) | – | – | 9 |

| JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Erik Morales (MEX)** | C | – | – |
| **Enrique Sanchez (MEX)** | – | C | – |
| **Vuyani Bungu (SA)** | – | – | C |
| Wayne McCullough (IRE) | 1 | – | – |
| Reynante Jamili (PHIL) | 2 | – | – |
| Spencer Oliver (GB) | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Michael Brodie (GB) | 4 | 11 | – |
| Jose Luis Bueno (MEX) | 5 | – | – |
| Pastor Maurin (ARG) | 6 | – | – |
| Guty Espadas (MEX) | 7 | 8 | – |
| Gerardo Martinez (MEX) | 8 | – | – |
| Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR) | 9 | 2 | – |
| Yonghoon Lee (KOR) | 10 | – | – |
| Carlos Barreto (VEN) | – | 1 | – |
| Bugiarso (INDO) | – | 4 | – |
| Rafael Del Valle (PR) | – | 5 | – |
| John Johnson (USA) | – | 6 | 5 |
| Serge Poilblan (FRA) | 16 | 7 | – |
| Victor Llerena (COL) | – | 9 | 1 |
| Lehlo Ledwaba (SA) | 29 | 10 | – |
| Vacant | – | – | 2 |
| Nurhuda (INDO) | – | – | 4 |
| Anell Barotillo (AUSTRL) | – | – | 6 |
| Jose Mendoza (COL) | – | – | 7 |
| Ariston Clayton (USA) | 23 | – | 8 |
| Esteban Morales (COL) | – | – | 9 |
| Ernesto Gray (COL) | – | – | 10 |

| BANTAMWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)** | C | – | – |
| **Nana Konadu (GHA)** | – | C | – |
| **Tim Austin (USA)** | – | – | C |
| Paul Ayala (USA) | 1 | 2 | 12 |
| Adan Vargas (MEX) | 2 | – | 7 |
| Jorge Monsalvo (COL) | 3 | – | – |
| Danny Romero (USA) | 4 | – | – |
| Dario Azuaga (PAR) | 5 | – | 5 |
| Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI) | 6 | – | – |
| Victor Rabanales (MEX) | 7 | – | – |
| In Jin Chi (KOR) | 8 | – | – |
| Masahiko Nakamura (JAP) | 9 | – | – |
| Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX) | 10 | 4 | – |
| Lukhin CP Gym (THAI) | – | 1 | – |
| Johnny Bredahl (DEN) | 11 | 3 | – |
| Yong Hoon Lee (KOR) | – | 5 | – |
| Daorung C. Siriwat (THAI) | – | 6 | – |
| Jose Rojas (VEN) | – | 7 | – |
| Sahoiu Phaisarn Gym (THA) | – | 8 | – |
| Paul Lloyd (GB) | 16 | 9 | – |
| Johnny Armour (GB) | 24 | 10 | – |
| Adrian Kaspari (INDO) | – | – | 1 |
| Vacant | – | – | 2 |
| Jesus Perez (COL) | 19 | – | 3 |
| Juan Sanchez (COL) | – | – | 4 |
| Alberto Ikeda (JAP) | – | – | 6 |
| Oscar Garro (ARG) | 13 | – | 8 |
| Cesar Singo (ECU) | – | – | 9 |
| Willy Perdomo (DR) | – | – | 10 |

| JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)** | C | – | – |
| **Satoshi Iida (JAP)** | – | C | – |
| **Johnny Tapia (USA)** | – | – | C |
| Joel Luna Zarate (MEX) | 1 | 7 | – |
| Luis Bolanos (COL) | 2 | – | – |
| Luis Benavides (COL) | 3 | – | – |
| Raffy Montalban (PHIL) | 4 | – | – |
| In Joo Cho (KOR) | 5 | 10 | – |
| Adonis Cruz (NIC) | 6 | – | – |
| Victor Godoy (ARG) | 7 | – | – |
| Pedro Rincon (COL) | 8 | – | 10 |
| Keiji Yamaguchi (JAP) | 9 | – | – |
| Samson Dutchboygym (THAI) | 10 | – | – |
| Julio Gamboa (NIC) | 27 | 1 | 4 |
| Yokthai Sithoar (THAI) | – | 2 | – |
| Dario Azuaga (PAR) | – | 3 | – |
| Veeraphol Sahaprom (THAI) | – | 4 | – |
| Evangelo Perez (PAN) | – | 5 | 12 |
| Felix Machado (VEN) | 25 | 6 | – |
| Takato Toguchi (JAP) | – | 8 | – |
| Raffy Montalban (PHIL) | – | 9 | – |
| Danny Romero (USA) | – | – | 1 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ubadel Soto (COL) | – | – | 2 |
| Ratanachai Sor Voraphin (THAI) | 12 | – | 3 |
| Sombak Singchawan (THAI) | – | – | 5 |
| Ernesto Briceno (VEN) | – | – | 6 |
| Jaji Sibali (SA) | – | – | 7 |
| Solo Ikeda (JAP) | – | – | 8 |
| Joel Luna (MEX) | – | – | 9 |

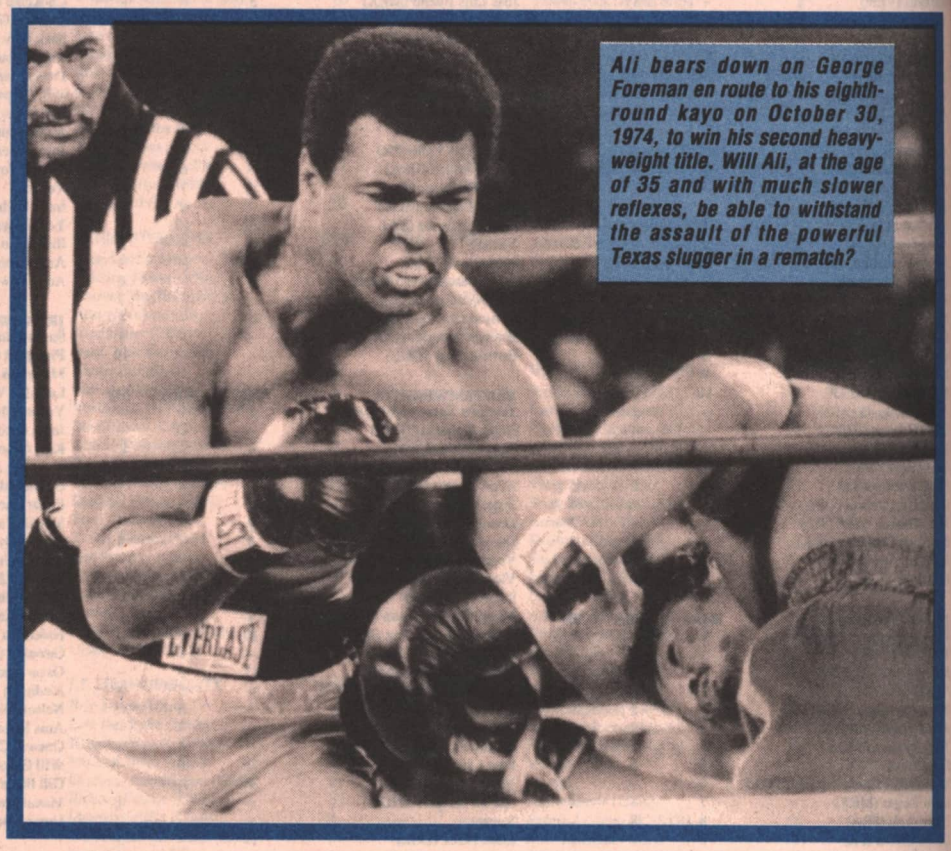
| FLYWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)** | C | – | – |
| **Jose Bonilla (VEN)** | – | C | – |
| **Mark Johnson (USA)** | – | – | C |
| Gabriel Mira (MEX) | 1 | – | – |
| Raul Juarez (MEX) | 2 | – | – |
| David Guerault (FRA) | 3 | 8 | 9 |
| Yong Soon Chang (KOR) | 4 | – | – |
| Alejandro Montiel (MEX) | 5 | – | – |
| Manny Pacquiao (PHIL) | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| Jesper Jensen (DEN) | 7 | – | – |
| Alex Ali Baba (GHA) | 8 | – | – |
| Alexander Mahmutov (RUS) | 9 | – | – |
| Chokchai Chokviwat (THAI) | 10 | – | – |
| Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN) | – | 1 | – |
| Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI) | – | 2 | – |
| Yuri Arbachakov (RUS) | – | 3 | 6 |
| Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI) | – | 4 | – |
| Will Grigsby (USA) | 11 | 6 | – |
| Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN) | – | 7 | 3 |
| Jesper Jensen (DEN) | – | 9 | – |
| Jose Lopez (PR) | – | 10 | – |
| Takato Toguchi (JAP) | – | – | 1 |
| Vacant | – | – | 2 |
| Irene Pacheco (COL) | – | – | 4 |
| Yodchingchai Sornthong (THAI) | – | – | 5 |
| Ilido Julio (COL) | 18 | – | 7 |
| Arthur Johnson (USA) | – | 12 | 8 |
| Adey Lewis (GB) | 13 | – | 10 |

| JR. FLYWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)** | C | – | – |
| **Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)** | – | C | – |
| **Mauricio Pastrana (COL)** | – | – | C |
| Ladislao Vazquez (MEX) | 1 | – | – |
| Yosam Choi (KOR) | 2 | – | – |
| Joma Gamboa (PHIL) | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Kaaj Chartbandi (THAI) | 4 | – | – |
| Phanieng Sasiprabha (THAI) | 5 | – | – |
| Gabriel Munoz (MEX) | 6 | – | – |
| Edgar Cardenas (MEX) | 7 | – | – |
| Sangik Yang (KOR) | 8 | – | – |
| Sandre Oviedo (ARG) | 9 | – | – |
| Shiro Yahiro (JAP) | 10 | 5 | – |
| Hadao C.P. Gym (THAI) | – | 1 | – |
| Carlos Murillo (PAN) | – | 3 | 7 |
| Suzuki Kabato (JAP) | – | 4 | – |
| Hidenobu Honda (JAP) | 13 | 6 | 10 |
| Oswaldo Guerrero (MEX) | – | 7 | 3 |
| Oscar Andrade (MEX) | 12 | 8 | – |
| Mednqon 3K Battery (THAI) | – | 9 | – |
| Nelson Dieppa (DR) | – | 10 | – |
| Anis Roga (INDO) | – | – | 1 |
| Onewin Chareon (THAI) | – | – | 4 |
| Will Grigsby (USA) | – | – | 5 |
| Gill Ikeda (JAP) | – | – | 6 |
| Manuel Jesus Herrera (DR) | – | – | 8 |
| Hernan Berrio (COL) | – | – | 9 |

| STRAWWEIGHTS | WBC | WBA | IBF |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Ricardo Lopez (MEX)** | C | – | – |
| **Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)** | – | C | – |
| **Zolani Petelo (SA)** | – | – | C |
| Rocky Lin (JAP) | 1 | 1 | – |
| Payak Nakornluang (THAI) | 2 | 8 | – |
| Carmelo Caceres (PHIL) | 3 | – | 6 |
| Lindi Memani (SA) | 4 | 12 | – |
| Wandee Chareon (THAI) | 5 | – | – |
| Myung Sup Park (KOR) | 6 | – | – |
| Domingo Guillen (DR) | 7 | – | – |
| Sang Chul Lee (KOR) | 8 | – | – |
| Andy Tabanas (PHIL) | 9 | 9 | 2 |
| Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP) | 10 | – | – |
| Jose Garcia (COL) | – | 2 | – |
| Ronnie Magramo (PHIL) | – | 3 | – |
| Songkram Porpaoin (THAI) | – | 4 | – |
| Randy Mangubat (PHIL) | – | 5 | – |
| Chana Porpaoin (THAI) | – | 6 | – |
| Satoru Abe (JAP) | 18 | 7 | – |
| Wondee Charoen (THAI) | – | 10 | – |
| Luis Lazarte (ARG) | – | – | 1 |
| Ratanapol Sow Voraphin (THAI) | – | – | 3 |
| Ala Villamor (PHIL) | – | – | 4 |
| Juan Herrera (COL) | – | – | 5 |
| Boy Ikeda (JAP) | – | – | 7 |
| Daniel Reyes (COL) | 17 | – | 8 |
| Faisol Akbar (INDO) | 28 | – | 9 |
| Denkaosan Kaowichit (THAI) | – | – | 10 |

RING CLASSIC

# ALI at 35




*Ali bears down on George Foreman en route to his eighth-round kayo on October 30, 1974, to win his second heavyweight title. Will Ali, at the age of 35 and with much slower reflexes, be able to withstand the assault of the powerful Texas slugger in a rematch?*

**By Michael Silver**

*(Editor's note: This is a condensed version)*

The announcement came as no great surprise to most boxing people, Muhammad Ali had declared his "unretirement," only one month after saying that he was leaving boxing forever, and his intention to defend the crown against number-five rated Duane Bobick, to be followed by Jimmy Young and George Foreman in that order. A most enthusiastic "unretirement." One week later, Ali, obviously having second and third thoughts, changed his mind again and re-retired. What? Oh well, at least he was keeping his name in the news. Now once again he is back in action.

Ali, it seems, not only plays games with us, he plays games with himself as well. Ali was either experimenting with the idea of eventual retirement and decided to try it on for size and see if it took, or he was pressed into the original announcement in order to take some of the heat off of himself due to family problems and his close call with Ken Norton. Whatever the reason, it is obvious no retirement is going to stick, not at this stage of his career, at the peak of his popularity and earning power. It is not easy to step down from a throne, especially when you want to be king forever. Ask Sugar Ray.

So now Muhammad Ali launches yet another phase of his incredible career and we mortals watch excitedly, waiting to see what

From THE RING, April 1977

# How Does He Compare With His Heroes?

his next move will be, glad that this super legend is still among us to make things a little more interesting.

Ali, who was 35 on January 17, is entering the most precarious phase of his career, and the big question is, how much does Ali really have left and how much longer can he go on? Historians often look into the past for clues as to what the future holds. Perhaps some of the answers we seek can be found in our searching through the archives of ring history.

Muhammad Ali, throughout his illustrious career, has often drawn comparisons of himself to three other great black champions: Sugar Ray Robinson, Joe Louis, and Jack Johnson—the three fighters he admires more than any others. All three of these super champs also continued to fight well past their peaks. Can we draw any parallels between their careers and Ali's at similar stages that will give us a clue as to where Ali is going?

## SUGAR RAY ROBINSON

Ray Robinson, to whom Ali has often compared himself in style, was possibly the greatest fighter, pound-for-pound, the world has ever seen. Ali used to refer to himself as the "Heavyweight Sugar Ray." The comparison was not without merit. In his younger days, when Ali could dance all night and fire lightning four- and five-punch combinations, he did, indeed, resemble a heavyweight Ray Robinson.

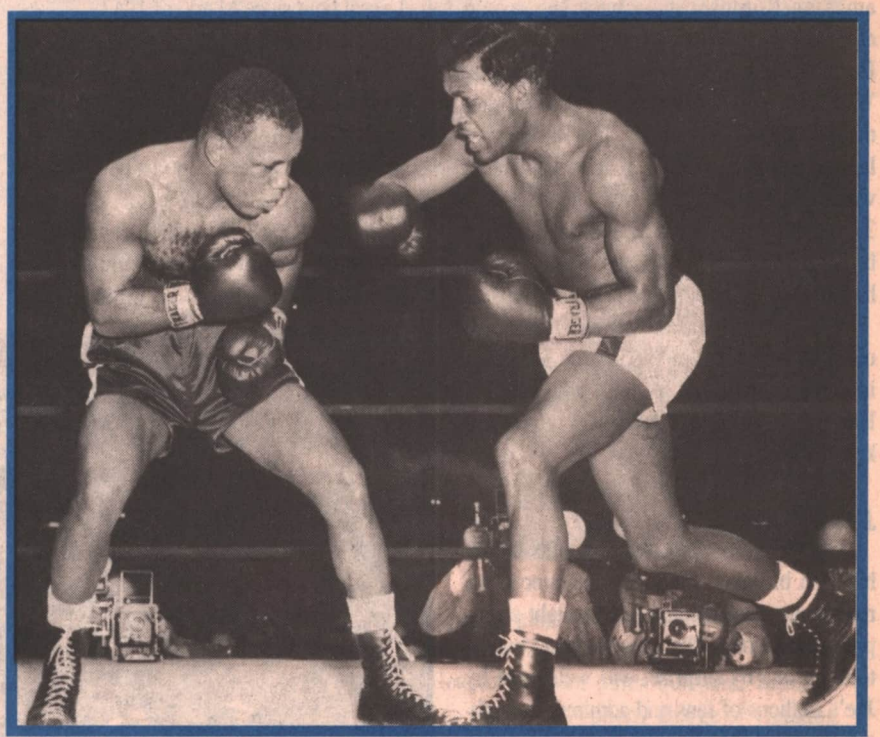
The middleweights are generally acknowledged to be the toughest division in boxing, combining the speed of the lighter weights and the heavy punching of the bigger men. Robinson fought professionally from 1940 to 1965, the last 16 years as a middleweight. For a man to be successful for as long as Ray was in this tough division is truly remarkable, to say the least.

At the age of 35, in 1955, Robinson was just launching his first comeback after a two-year retirement. He had retired in 1952 as middleweight champion after compiling a record of 132 victories in 135 fights. Robinson's retirement was meant to be for good, or so he thought.

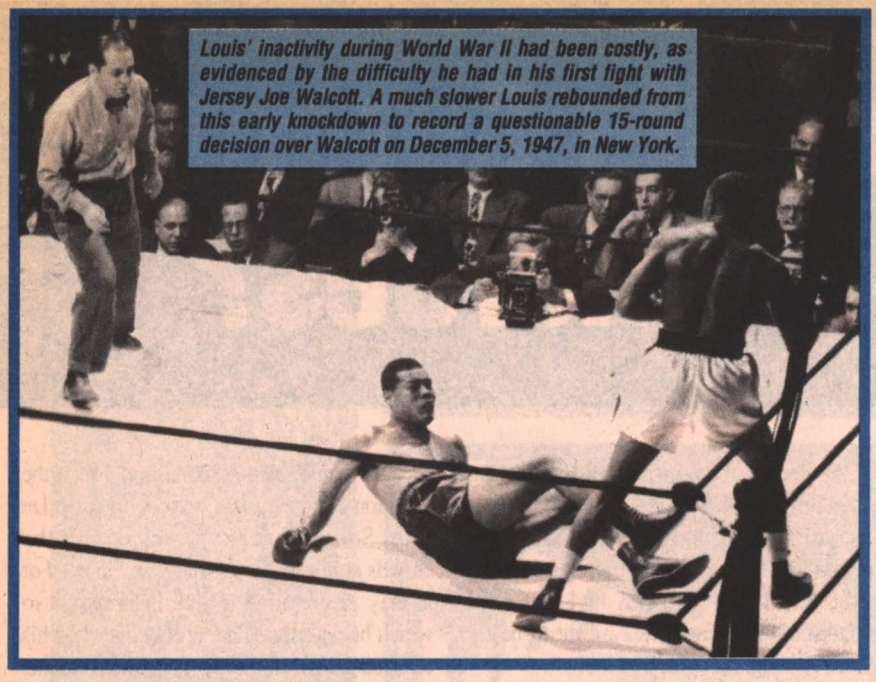
He had hoped to trade in his boxing gloves for dance slippers, and all started well for Robinson, whose natural grace and footwork carried over in front of the footlights of New York, Las Vegas, and Miami. The act's appeal was basically as a curiosity, and as a curiosity, it had nowhere to go. The novelty soon wore off. Robinson wasn't bad as a hoofer (in fact he got excellent reviews), but there were many dancers.

Nowhere else could Robinson attract the attention or money that was his in the prize ring. So, on January 5, 1955, with the crowds at his act diminishing, and in need of money to continue to live in the style to which he was accustomed, Ray launched his comeback against journeyman Joe Rindone. As expected Ray's timing was off, but he managed to look decent enough knocking out Rindone in the sixth round. It wasn't quite the Sugar Ray of old—not yet anyway.

Three weeks later, rushing things a bit, he took on veteran warhorse Ralph "Tiger" Jones, and was soundly drubbed in 10 rounds. The beating showed him where he really was. It took the beating by Tiger Jones plus four more tuneup bouts to get



*Moments like this, when Robinson was in control against "Tiger" Jones on January 19, 1955, were few and far between. The middleweight great, however, overcame this loss early in his comeback to win three more world titles before his career ended with a defeat in 1965.*



*Louis' inactivity during World War II had been costly, as evidenced by the difficulty he had in his first fight with Jersey Joe Walcott. A much slower Louis rebounded from this early knockdown to record a questionable 15-round decision over Walcott on December 5, 1947, in New York.*

the kinks out, and Robinson was back in good working order. Mind you, he was never quite the Sugar Ray of the late-'40s, yet he was still good enough to beat almost everyone else.

Eleven months after starting his comeback, on December 9, 1955, Robinson flashed his old form and kayoed Carl "Bobo" Olson to win the middleweight crown for the third time. Twice more the amazing Robinson won back the crown after losing it to Gene Fullmer and Carmen Basilio, defeating them both in return bouts. With each passing year the superb mechanism began to slow down and Robinson's last great fight, his last great performance, was on March 25, 1958, when at the age of 37 and 10 months, he defeated Basilio in 15 brutal rounds to win back the championship he had lost six months earlier.

The rest of Robinson's career from 1960 until his retirement in 1965 at the age of 45 is best forgotten, but to those who saw the Harlem dandy in his prime ... well, they knew better.

## JOE LOUIS

On March 1, 1949, three months before his 35th birthday, Joe Louis announced his retirement as undefeated heavyweight champion of the world. The announcement, which took no one by surprise, was welcomed by Joe's millions of fans and admirers throughout the world. Louis had done everything expected of a legend, and more: Champion for 12 years and successful defender of his title an unprecedented 25 times, there simply were no more worlds to conquer.

Besides, at 34, Louis was no longer the stalking killer that he had been in his prime. Sometime during his four years of inactivity, while a member of the armed forces during World War II, the great "Brown Bomber's" skills had faded. Although he engaged in countless exhibitions, entertaining our troops in every theater of operation, Louis had not had a real bout since March of 1942.

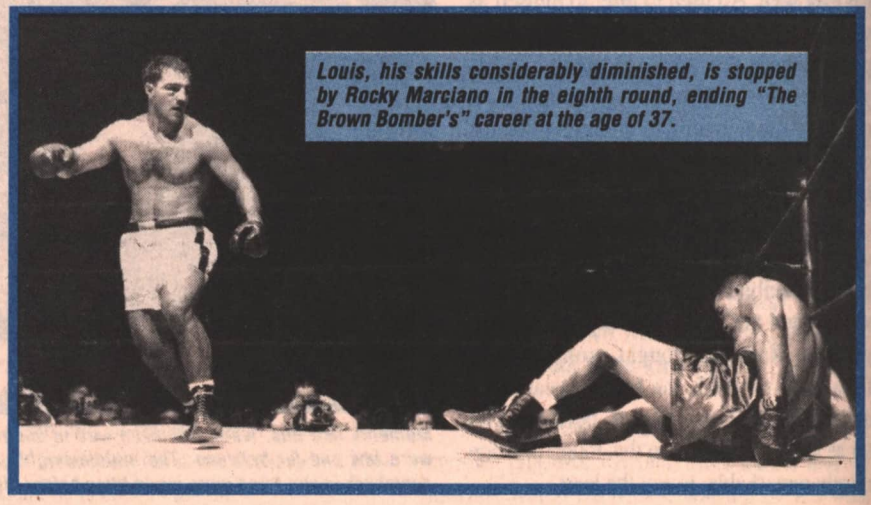
His return with Billy Conn in 1946 and his two battles with Jersey Joe Walcott in '47 and '48 revealed that age and inactivity had taken their toll. A slower and heavier Louis presented quite a contrast between the prewar edition and the 1946 model. Make no mistake, Louis was still deadly. He would knock out anybody he could hit. The trouble was that the jungle cat reflexes were gone forever. Louis could see the openings, but was no longer fast enough to take advantage, the age-old lament of the over-the-hill fighter.

It should be pointed out that Louis' difficulty in making a successful comeback was compounded by the fact that his inactivity came between the ages of 28 to 32, the years when most boxers begin to slide downhill. Ali's enforced 3½ years of inactivity ended at the age of 28 when he was still young enough to come back strong.

Unlike Ali, Louis was not able to adjust his style of fighting to compensate for his deteriorating skills. Besides, it is doubtful whether Louis would have changed even if he could. The rope-a-dope would never have been part of his strategy—it just wasn't in his makeup.

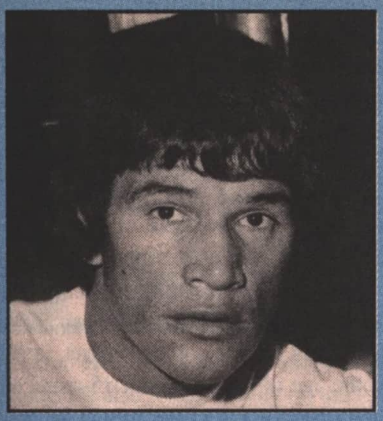
Unfortunately, Louis' retirement was short-lived. The enormous amount of money he owed the government in back taxes forced him back into the ring only 1½ years after he announced his retirement. On September 27, 1950, Louis made his ill-stared comeback, losing to Ezzard Charles in 15 inglorious rounds. Nevertheless, Louis continued his comeback, making as much money as he could, defeating eight men over the next year. At 37, he may not have been the destroyer of old, but he still had enough left to defeat the likes of Jimmy Bivins and Lee Savold, both top-ranked contenders.

On October 26, 1951, the Louis comeback came to an abrupt end when Rocky Marciano knocked him out in the eighth round. Louis, weighing 218 pounds (at his peak he scaled approximately 200 pounds), had closed Rocky's right eye and kept the fight fairly even until the eighth round, when the bludgeoning punches of Marciano's sus-



*Louis, his skills considerably diminished, is stopped by Rocky Marciano in the eighth round, ending "The Brown Bomber's" career at the age of 37.*

# THE RING RATINGS, April 1977



*Carlos Monzon*

**HEAVYWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Muhammad Ali**, Chicago, IL
1. **George Foreman**, Houston, TX
2. **Ken Norton**, San Diego, CA
3. **Jimmy Young**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **Larry Holmes**, Easton, PA
5. **Duane Bobick**, Bowlus, MN
6. **Howard Smith**, Los Angeles, CA
7. **Johnny Boudreaux**, Houston, TX
8. **Stan Ward**, Sacramento, CA
9. **Ron Lyle**, Denver, CO
10. **Joe Bugner**, England

**LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Vacant**
1. **Victor Galindez**, Argentina
2. **Len Hutchins**, Detroit, MI
3. **Richie Kates**, Brighton, NJ
4. **John Conteh**, England
5. **Jesse Burnett**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Bobby Cassidy**, Brentwood, NY
7. **Miguel Cuello**, Argentina
8. **Vonzell Johnson**, Kalamazoo, MI
9. **Alvaro Lopez**, Stockton, CA
10. **Mike Rossman**, Turnersville, NJ

**MIDDLEWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Carlos Monzon**, Argentina
1. **Mike Colbert**, Portland, OR
2. **Rodrigo Valdes**, Colombia
3. **Bennie Briscoe**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **Bobby Watts**, Philadelphia, PA
5. **David Love**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Gratien Tonna**, France
7. **Alan Minter**, England
8. **Vito Antuofermo**, Italy
9. **Tony Licata**, New Orleans, LA
10. **Leo Saenz**, Baltimore, MD

**JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Miguel Angel Castellini**, Argentina
1. **Eckhard Dagge**, Germany
2. **Maurice Hope**, England
3. **Elisha Obed**, Nassau, Bahamas
4. **Rocky Mattioli**, Australia
5. **Monty Betham**, New Zealand
6. **Jose Duran**, Spain
7. **Miguel Campanino**, Argentina
8. **Koichi Wajima**, Japan
9. **Frank Wissenbach**, Germany
10. **Alvin Anderson**, Baltimore, MD

**WELTERWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Carlos Palomino**, Mexico
1. **Pete Ranzany**, Sacramento, CA
2. **Clyde Gray**, Canada
3. **Jose Cuevas**, Mexico
4. **John Stracey**, England
5. **Armando Muniz**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Randy Shields**, Los Angeles, CA
7. **Johnny Gant**, Washington, D.C.
8. **Angel Espada**, Puerto Rico
9. **Miguel Barreto**, Puerto Rico
10. **Mel Dennis**, Houston, TX

**JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Wilfred Benitez**, Puerto Rico
1. **Antonio Cervantes**, Colombia
2. **Shengsak Muangsurin**, Thailand
3. **Hector Thompson**, Australia
4. **David Green**, England
5. **Rudy Hernandez**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Monroe Brooks**, Los Angeles, CA
7. **Nicolino Loche**, Argentina
8. **Cemal Kamaci**, Austria
9. **Miguel Velazquez**, Spain
10. **Saoul Mamby**, New York, NY

**LIGHTWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Roberto Duran**, Panama
1. **Esteban DeJesus**, Puerto Rico
2. **Vicente Saldivar**, Mexico
3. **Edwin Viruet**, Puerto Rico
4. **Vilomar Fernandez**, Dominican Republic
5. **Perico Fernandez**, Spain
6. **Hector Medina**, Dominican Republic
7. **Jose Marquez**, Puerto Rico
8. **Hugo Barraza**, Colombia
9. **Giancarlo Usai**, Italy
10. **Buzzsaw Yamabe**, Japan

**JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Samuel Serrano**, Puerto Rico
1. **Alfredo Escalera**, Puerto Rico
2. **Tyrone Everett**, Philadelphia, PA
3. **Walter Seeley**, Sayville, NY
4. **Rafael Limon**, Mexico
5. **Ben Villaflor**, Philippines
6. **Apollo Yoshio**, Japan
7. **Blakeney Matthews**, South Africa
8. **Reuben Castillo**, Las Vegas, NV
9. **Sigfredo Rodriguez**, Mexico
10. **Ezequiel Sanchez**, Dominican Republic

**FEATHERWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Alexis Arguello**, Nicaragua
1. **Danny Lopez**, Los Angeles, CA
2. **Jose Cervantes**, Colombia
3. **Lionel Hernandez**, Venezuela
4. **Art Hafey**, Canada
5. **Eder Jofre**, Brazil
6. **Yum Dong-Kyun**, South Korea
7. **Pedro Jiminez**, Spain
8. **David Kotey Poison**, Panama
9. **Rafael Ortega**, Panama
10. **Elio Cotina**, Italy

**BANTAMWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Alfonso Zamora**, Mexico
1. **Carlos Zarate**, Mexico
2. **Wilfredo Gomez**, Puerto Rico
3. **Eusebio Pedroza**, Panama
4. **Raul Tirada**, Mexico
5. **Paddy Maguire**, Ireland
6. **Frank Duarte**, Los Angeles, CA
7. **Robert Ruvaldino**, Mexico
8. **Salvatore Fabrizio**, Italy
9. **Daniel Trioulaire**, France
10. **Sean O'Grady**, Oklahoma City, OK

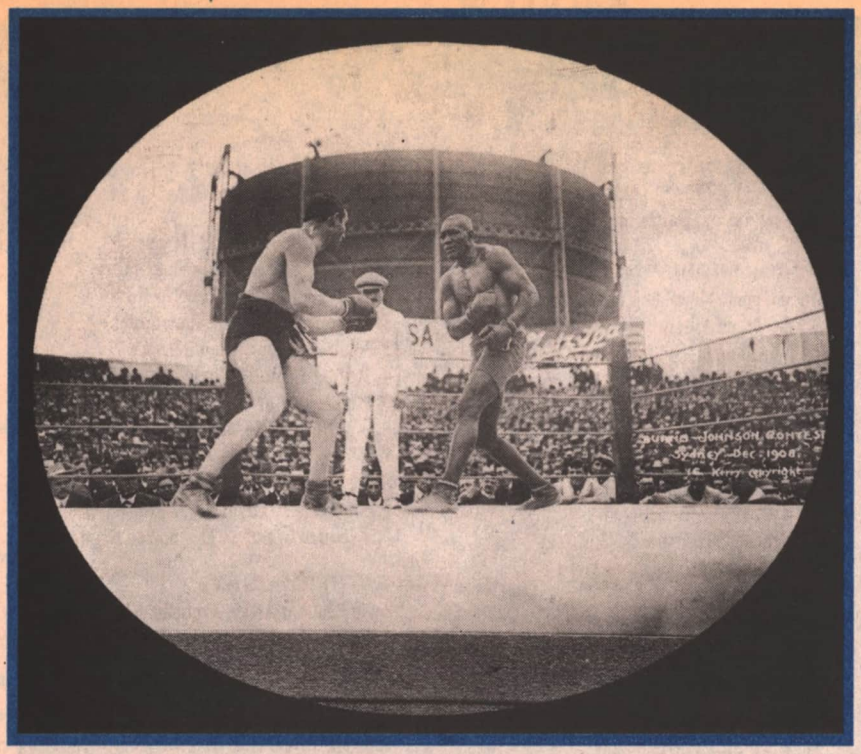
**FLYWEIGHTS**
**World Champ: Miguel Canto**, Mexico
1. **Guty Espadas**, Mexico
2. **Luis Estabe**, Venezuela
3. **Jorge Lujan**, Panama
4. **Yoko Gushiken**, Japan
5. **Juan Guzman**, Dominican Republic
6. **Alfonso Lopez**, Panama
7. **Betulio Gonzalez**, Venezuela
8. **Juan Alvarez**, Mexico
9. **Willie Jansen**, Las Vegas, NV
10. **Patrick Mambrwe**, Zambia

tained attack finally crashed through the weary old champ's lowered guard. Two knockdowns later, it was all over. A career and an era had come to an end.

The event remains forever as one of the saddest moments in all of sports history. Louis was an inspiration. The thrills and drama of his ring career will never be forgotten. Boxing owes the immortal Brown Bomber a debt it can never repay.

## JACK JOHNSON

1913 was a rough year for Jack Johnson. Not in terms of challengers. No one, especially no white man, seemed able to dethrone "The Galveston Giant." His troubles came from other quarters. Johnson was framed on a phony charge of violating the Mann Act, transporting a woman across state lines for immoral purposes. This seemed the only way the white estab-




***Jack Johnson overcame racial prejudice to win the world heavyweight title from Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia, on December 26, 1908. The ring skills of the flamboyant, egotistical Johnson would hold up well enough for him to continue fighting professionally until the age of 50.***

lishment could remove this black thorn from its side. In order to avoid prison, the persecuted Johnson fled the country and went into a self-imposed exile that was to last seven years.

The culmination of events that eventually drove Jack Johnson out of the country began in 1908 when he easily dethroned Tommy Burns to win the title, thus becoming the first black man to hold the heavyweight crown. Flamboyant, dashing, and a ladies' man, Johnson had dared, one year later, to marry a white woman, the first of three white wives. Johnson, the supreme egotist, did as he pleased and to hell with what the white, or for that matter black, establishment thought. And, it should be noted, in 1908 there were no powerful black organizations to back him—not that Johnson would have asked for their help or been part of any organization. Johnson was his own man, a rugged individualist whose only real cause was his own. Considering the fact he won the title only 43 years after the Civil War had ended, one can only marvel at the kind of courage the man must have had. Truly a remarkable personality.

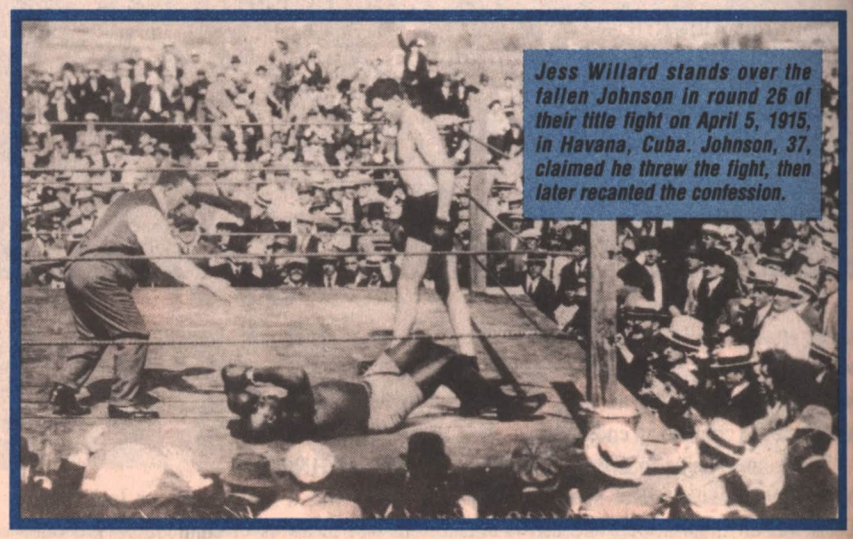
1910 saw Johnson annihilate former champion Jim Jeffries in 15 one-sided rounds. The once-invincible Jeffries had been dragged out of retirement in the hopes of defeating Johnson. Incidentally, this was the first fight to be billed as the "Fight Of The Century," and its aftermath resulted in race riots in cities throughout the country.

By 1912, it became painfully obvious to the establishment that no white man seemed capable of defeating this black demon. The nationwide search for a so-called "white hope" had failed miserably. They were, with few exceptions, comprised mostly of unskilled, large-framed bumpkins.

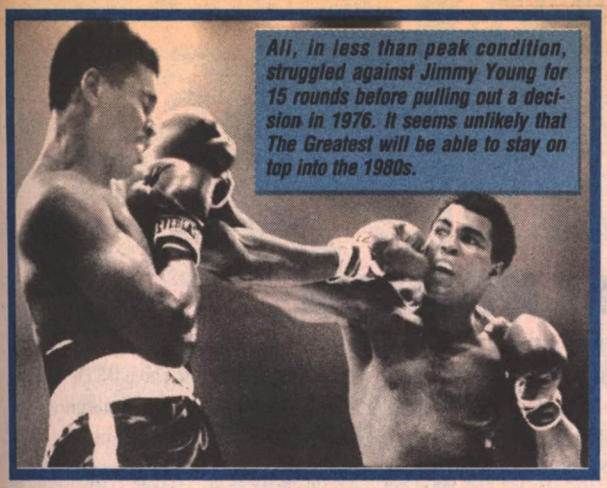
Johnson was 35 years old when he began his exile. Two years later, big Jess Willard, one of the better white hopes, would defeat him for the title. Johnson claimed he threw the fight as part of a deal to allow him to return to the United States a free man, but later on refuted his confession. Most fistic experts believe Willard's 26th-round kayo of Johnson to be legitimate. Whether the bout was on the level is not a concern here. What is important, with regards to Ali's future, is to note that Johnson continued to fight effectively as a pro right up to the age of 50! Although way past his prime, Johnson remained active, still exhibiting the defensive brilliance that marked his entire career. Very few could hit him solidly. In fact, in 1926, at the age of 48, he won a 15-round decision over one Pat Lester to win the heavyweight championship of New Mexico. The audacious Johnson, ego still intact, promptly issued a challenge to world champion Jack Dempsey.

Long after Johnson's active fight career came to an end, he continued to engage in a number of three-round exhibitions, displaying his intact skills to a new generation of fight fans. His last ring appearance was at the age of 67 when he boxed a three-round exhibition against old foe Joe Jeanette.

What was the secret of Jack Johnson's fistic longevity? Why was he able to last as long as he did? There are several reasons, the foremost being that Johnson was the greatest defensive heavyweight boxer who ever lived. Unlike Ali, whose abundant natural gifts of speed and fluid movement allowed him to make many mistakes and get away unscathed, Johnson relied primarily on orthodox boxing carried to near



***Jess Willard stands over the fallen Johnson in round 26 of their title fight on April 5, 1915, in Havana, Cuba. Johnson, 37, claimed he threw the fight, then later recanted the confession.***



*Ali, in less than peak condition, struggled against Jimmy Young for 15 rounds before pulling out a decision in 1976. It seems unlikely that The Greatest will be able to stay on top into the 1980s.*

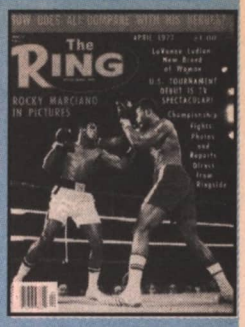
perfection. He was especially adept at feinting and counterpunching. He also relied heavily on the lost art of blocking and parrying punches. It was this talent, painstakingly perfected, that kept him from taking any beatings long after the spring in his legs was gone. It was said by fistic pundits of the day that Johnson had a sixth sense, an uncanny ability to anticipate what his opponent's next move was going to be. In actuality, it was Johnson's boxing skills that only made it seem that way.

Getting back to Ali, here we have a man who may be the greatest natural born boxer who ever lived. There have been other natural fighters, but Ali stands apart from all the rest. If one were pressed to describe his style in one sentence it would be this: He is a heavyweight who has fought like a lightweight. Ali never learned to slip a punch because he could easily avoid them by leaning his upper body back in the nick of time, a strategy that normally invites disaster. Ali also never bothered to learn to infight because, at his peak, his foot speed prevented anyone from cornering him. His coordination, timing, and grace all meshed beautifully.

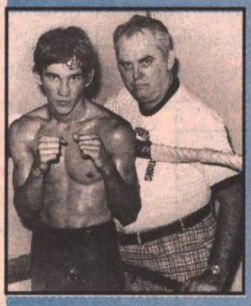
It is a safe bet to say that no heavyweight will ever successfully duplicate this unique style. It is and will always remain an Ali original. This description is of the vintage Ali, the Ali of 10 years ago. In comparison to what he once was, Ali has slowed down to a walk. Yet even now when the legs have lost their wings and the reflexes have been dulled by time, Ali still exhibits enough of the old speed and maneuverability to hold his own with any of the top contenders. When the going gets rough and the title is slipping from his grasp, Ali will revert back to the basic tools, the old strategies, that have always worked for him: the stinging left jab, the circling footwork, the swift left-right combinations. But this is getting harder to do with each passing year.

It is doubtful that Ali will be able to duplicate Jack Johnson's extraordinary feat of fighting into his late-'40s. Ali's performances over the past three years indicate that his fistic future resembles more that of a Robinson, who at 35 still had enough left to carry him effectively through the next two years. After the age of 37, or at most 38, Ali will be too far gone to call upon that one last big effort. He has done that too many times already. It is at this point that Ali's decision to retire will have been made for him by that most powerful of all forces—Father Time. ■

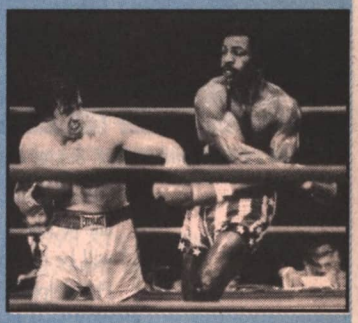
# THE RING, April 1977



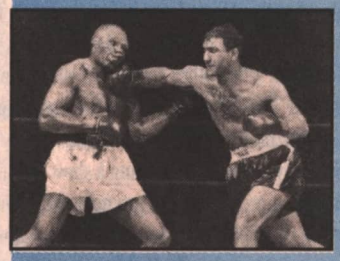

***The Cover:*** The questions of how much longer Ali can hold on and how he compares with the greats he idolized are the cover story, but there is also a section inside devoted to the man who would eventually take the title from Ali, Leon Spinks. Olympic gold medalist Spinks had just made his professional debut, knocking out "Lightning" Bob Smith in five rounds in Las Vegas.



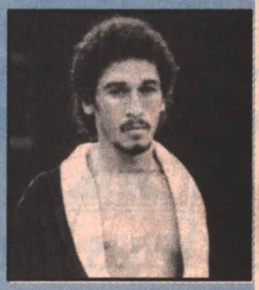
***Teenaged Green Machine:*** As popular with high school cheerleaders as he is in the ring, Sean O'Grady, a lethal-punching teenager from Oklahoma City, is profiled. O'Grady had won 41 of his first 42 pro fights, and, with the help of his promoter/father, Pat, was climbing quickly up the bantamweight ladder.



***Gonna Fly Now:*** THE RING looks at a movie about a dim-witted, lovable Philly pug who has two pet turtles named Cuff and Link and gets the chance of a lifetime in *Rocky*. The film launched the career of Sylvester Stallone, who starred as the title character, Rocky Balboa. The inspiration for Balboa was heavyweight Chuck Wepner, who hung tough with Ali for 15 rounds in 1975 before getting knocked out. *Rocky* won the Academy Award for Best Picture in '76.



***Rocky Double Feature:*** THE RING pushes back the hands of time to recall through pictures the great career of the *real* Rock (instead of the *reel* Rock), Rocky Marciano, boxing's only undefeated heavyweight champion. Marciano turned Jersey Joe Walcott's face into silly putty with this jolting blast en route to a 13-round kayo and the title.



***Fighter Of The Month:*** Samuel Serrano retained the WBA junior lightweight title, recovering from a first-round knockdown against Alberto Herrera. The Puerto Rican peppered Herrera with his right hand on the way to an 11th-round kayo in his first defense of the belt, which he won from Ben Villaflor the previous year.

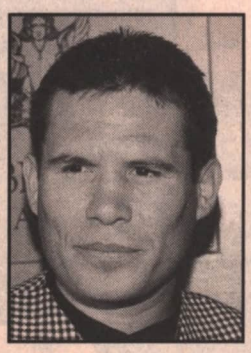
# LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

## THE REMATCH OF THE MISMATCH

The 1996 dream fight that turned out in reality to be a one-sided disappointment, **Oscar De La Hoya** vs. **Julio Cesar Chavez**, is going to become a reality again at the Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas on September 18. Though "The Golden Boy" dominated the Mexican veteran for four rounds before Chavez was halted on cuts in their first encounter, indications that Chavez was cut prior to the bout created the air of controversy necessary to prompt a rematch.

De La Hoya has reportedly been guaranteed $6-million for the WBC welterweight title defense, with Chavez guaranteed $2-million. But factoring in percentages of pay-per-view and Mexican television revenues, promoter **Bob Arum** speculated that "Chavez can make in excess of $10-million and Oscar has a very good chance to make $20-million, which would be his record purse."



*De La Hoya and Chavez: Set for September*

Both competitors have to pass final tests in June, however, before the path to paydirt is clear. De La Hoya's oft-postponed mandatory against **Patrick Charpentier** was set for the 13th, while Chavez was slated to meet **Ken Sigurani** on the undercard of the June 25 **Lou Savarese-Buster Douglas** pay-per-view.

Considering Chavez is two years older than when De La Hoya trounced him the first time, and will be fighting at seven pounds above his best weight of 140, chances are that the rematch, like the original, will fall well short of its hype.

## LISTEN UP

IBF super middleweight champion **Charles Brewer** appeared ready for a breakthrough fight on HBO after his impressive stoppage of **Herol Graham** in March, but according to promoter J **Russell Peltz**, the injured right ankle he suffered during the fight has put everything on hold. "The doctors called it a 'bad sprain' and he's been wearing an air cast," Peltz said in early-April. "He's overdue for a mandatory defense against **Antoine Byrd**, so that will be his next fight—but it won't be for several months." As for a suggested tilt with IBF middleweight champ and fellow Philadelphia fighter **Bernard Hopkins**, Peltz said there isn't enough money to make it happen ... Details on **Arturo Gatti's** first fight since his January loss to **Angel Manfredy** were beginning to surface at press time. The former junior lightweight champ is expected to make his return on an HBO *Boxing After Dark* show in August, and former Olympian **Ivan Robinson** has been mentioned as the potential opponent ... **America Presents** has a pay-per-view scheduled for July 11 at the Alamodome in San Antonio. The main event will be the rubber match between **Azumah Nelson** and **James Leija**, who drew in their first fight and split the next two. Four other former world champions are on the card, as **Gabe Ruelas** will face **Troy Dorsey**, and **Goyo Vargas** goes against **Tracy Patterson** ... Unbeaten junior middleweight **David Reid** is scheduled for a homecoming on Saturday, June 27, headlining a show in Philadelphia. No opponent had been named at press time, but promoter **Mat Tinley** said it would be another step up in competition ... Sources at **Top Rank** indicated that WBC super bantamweight champ **Erik Morales** will defend against **Junior Jones** in September. While Jones is unquestionably a risky opponent for the young Mexican, the idea is to make potential star Morales more well-known.

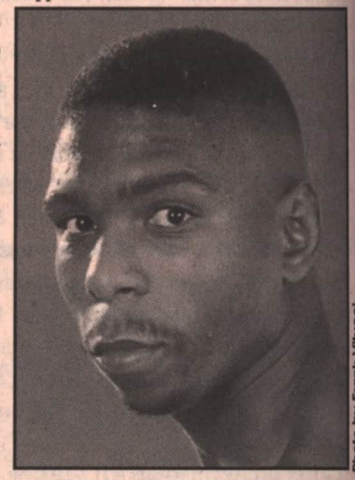


Photo by Frank Vitucci

*Brewer: "Hatchet" temporarily chopped down*

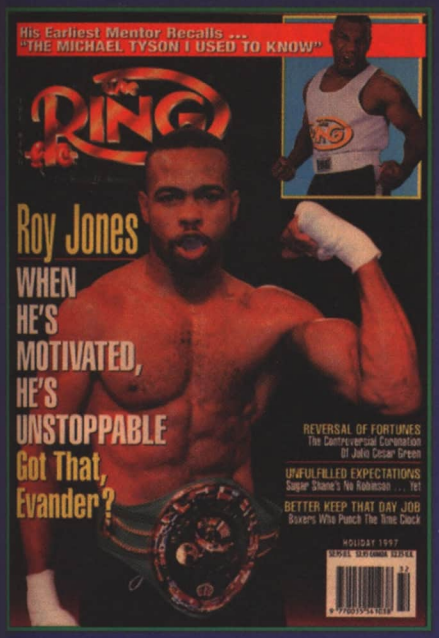
## FUTURE FIGHTS

**By Art Manteris**

VP/Director of Race and Sports Operations Las Vegas Hilton SuperBook

| Favorite | Underdog | Odds | The Skinny |
|---|---|---|---|
| Keith Mullings | Yory Boy Campas | 7-5 | Slight edge to the slicker boxer |
| Oscar De La Hoya | Julio Cesar Chavez | 12-1 | No contest |
| Ricardo Lopez | Rosendo Alvarez | 2-1 | Alvarez can't duplicate last performance |
| Marco Antonio Barrera | Kennedy McKinney | 7-5 | Has to be a thriller |

Las Vegas Hilton

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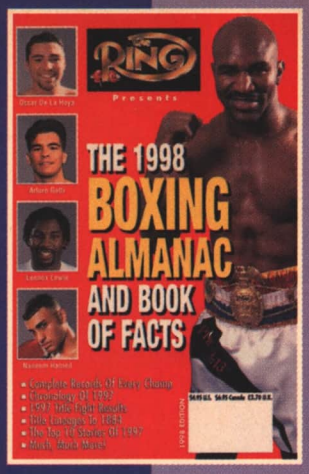


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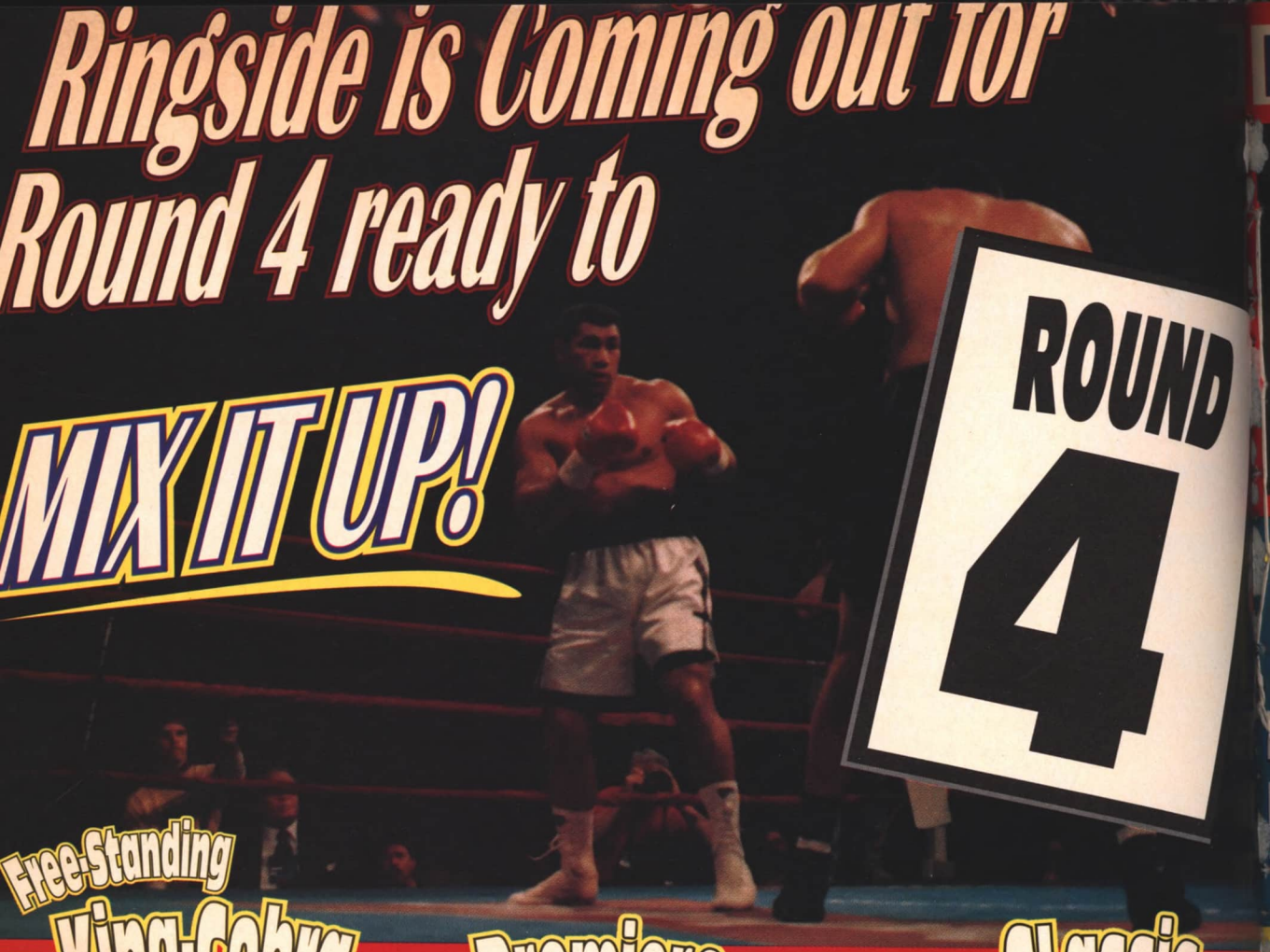


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